

Library Copy I A Oregon

BLM LIBRARY



88072879

Recreation Area Management Plan

Owyhee River



DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
Bureau of Land Management

GV
191 .42
.07
O98
1983

District - Oregon
District - Idaho
District - Nevada





United States Department of the Interior

IN REPLY REFER TO

8300

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
Vale District
Boise District
Elko District

April 29, 1983

Dear Owyhee River User:

The Owyhee River management plan has been developed to provide guidance for the management of 192 miles of the main stem Owyhee River and 50 miles of the South Fork Owyhee River within Oregon, Idaho and Nevada. It establishes management direction through a comprehensive set of actions that will provide the Owyhee and South Fork Owyhee Rivers a level of resource protection, development and public use consistent with interim guidelines for managing wilderness study areas and the Oregon State Scenic Waterways Act. The river is currently under consideration by Congress for inclusion in the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System.

Development of the plan began in May of 1982 and was the effort of three BLM districts and a citizens group of private, industry, and local and state government representatives. The draft management plan was completed and available for public review and comment from November 1982 to February 1983. During this same period, public meetings were held in Jordan Valley, and Portland, Oregon, and Boise, Idaho. Public response included 169 letters with over 800 comments and an attendance of approximately 90 people and over 150 comments at the public meetings. The final plan has now been completed and a copy is attached for your use.

We appreciate the involvement and assistance of all those who cooperated in the development of this plan and look forward to continued public participation in the management of these outstanding rivers.

Sincerely,

Fearl M. Parker *Martin Zimmer* *Rodney Harris*

Fearl Parker
District Manager, Vale

Martin Zimmer
District Manager, Boise

Rodney Harris
District Manager, Elko

BLM Library
Denver Federal Center
Bldg. 50, OC-521
P.O. Box 25047
Denver, CO 80225

#41856611

ID: 88072879

GV
191.42
.07
098
1983

Prepared by: Gerald Meyer
Wally Meyer
John Benedict
Gene Drais
Steven Ashworth

Illustrated by: Mark Davis

Date April 29, 1983

**Recreation Area Management Plan
for the
Owyhee River
Oregon
Idaho
Nevada**

**U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
Vale District - Oregon
Boise District - Idaho
Elko District - Nevada**

Raymond E. Monroe

Recommended by: _____

Ray Monroe, Southern Malheur Resource Area Manager,
Vale District

Barry Cushing

Recommended by: _____

Barry Cushing, Northern Malheur Resource Area Manager,
Vale District

Oscar Anderson

Recommended by: _____

Oscar Anderson, Owyhee Resource Area Manager,
Boise District

C. Vernon Peugh

Recommended by: _____

C. Vernon Peugh, Bruneau Resource Area Manager,
Boise District

Robert E. Bolton

Recommended by: _____

Robert Bolton, Acting Elko Resource Area Manager,
Elko District

Fearl M. Parker

Approved by: _____

Fearl Parker, District Manager
Vale District

Martin Zimmer

Approved by: _____

Martin Zimmer, District Manager
Boise District

Rodney Harris

Approved by: _____

Rodney Harris, District Manager
Elko District

Table of Contents



Part I - Introduction Background

Page

Historical Perspective	1
Recent Legislation	1
Purpose and Scope	2
Relationship to Bureau Planning	2

Setting and Multiple Resource Values

Location	2
Access	2
Area Size and Ownership	3
Physiography	3
Landscape Character	3
Vegetation	3
Fish and Wildlife	9
Cultural Resources	10
Recreation	10
Wilderness Study Areas	11
Water Rights	11
Range (Livestock)	11
Minerals	12
Energy and Utilities	12
Military Operations	12

User Profile and Visitation Estimates

Recreation Activity Preferences	12
Vehicles and Other Specialized Equipment	13
Seasons and Times of Use	13
Length of Stay	15
Party Size	15
Place of Origin	15
Visitation Estimates	15

Major Issues

Issue I	- Level and Degree of Administrative Control	16
Issue II	- Environmental Protection	17
Issue III	- Land Ownership	17
Issue IV	- Management Cooperation Between Agencies	17



Part II - Management Objectives and Constraints

Management Objectives	19
Management Constraints	20



Part III - The Management Program

Issue I	- Actions	21
Issue II	- Actions	24
Issue III	- Actions	26
Issue IV	- Actions	27



Part IV - Implementation Phasing and Cost Estimates



Part V - Appendices

...have inhabited the
Owyhee country as early as 12,000 years ago, but
the history of this region began in 1817 with
the first explorations by white men. The name
Owyhee was first used at a military expedition led
by General W. H. Harrison in 1818. Two American
explorers, accompanying the party, distinguished
the Owyhee River country and by the 1820's the
river had become known as the "Owyhee".

In 1863 prospectors discovered gold along Juntura
Creek, and the mining towns of Delamar, Owyhee,
Bridges City, Silver City, and Bicknell were
developed in the vicinity of the Owyhee River
valley. By the 1880's cattle and sheep ranching had
become established as the primary and dominant
use of the Owyhee.

The first known commercial use of the river
occurred in 1907, when commercial furrier
Prince Hall constructed from Three Forks to Harts
utilizing surplus World War II surplus aircraft parts.
Bicknell was renowned as a ranching town throughout
the 1920's and 1930's. The Bureau of Land
Management (BLM) began managing recreation
use in 1974, when it acquired the river.

Use increased gradually until 1978, when 1,000
visitors were reported. In 1980, 2,000 visitors were
reported. The Owyhee and national parks
have long been a source of recreation.

Recent Legislation

The Owyhee Wild and Scenic River Study was
completed in 1978, pursuant to the National Wild
and Scenic Rivers Act as amended by Public Law
95-623. The study recommended that a 102-mile
segment of the Owyhee River, extending from the
Cock Valley Indian Reservation to the Owyhee
Reservoir be added to the National Wild and
Scenic Rivers System, under administration of the
Bureau of Land Management and the State of
Oregon.

The South Fork of the Owyhee River was not
included in the Owyhee Wild and Scenic River
Study. However, the National Park Service has
included the South Fork in its Klamath River
Riverway, and has designated it as a National
Scenic River. The study also recommended
that the National Wild and Scenic River System
be included in the National Wild and Scenic River System.

In 1979 the state of Oregon designated the
Owyhee River from the Idaho-Oregon border to
Three Forks and from Columbia Falls to the
Owyhee Reservoir as State Wild and Scenic River.

Part I - Introduction



Background Historical Perspective

Native Americans associated with the Northern Great Basin may have inhabited the Owyhee Uplands as early as 12,000 years ago, but recorded history of this region began in 1812 with the first explorations by white men. The name Owyhee evolved out of a scouting expedition led by Donald McKenzie in 1818. Two Hawaiian Islanders accompanying the party disappeared in the Owyhee River vicinity and by the 1830's the river had become known as the "Owyhee".

In 1863 prospectors discovered gold along Jordan Creek, and the mining towns of DeLamar, Dewey, Ruby City, Silver City and Baxterville were developed in the vicinity of the Owyhee River in Idaho. By the 1880's cattle and sheep ranchers had become established on the plateaus and canyons of the Owyhee.

The first known recreation use of the river occurred in 1951, when commercial outfitter Prince Helfrich floated from Three Forks to Rome utilizing surplus World War II rubber assault rafts. Boating use remained extremely light throughout the 1950's and 1960's. The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) began recording recreation use in 1974, when 482 persons floated the river.

Use increased gradually until 1978, when 1,000 boaters were recorded. By 1980, 2,000 boaters had discovered the Owyhee and popular campsites were beginning to show the effect of recreational use.

Recent Legislation

The Owyhee Wild and Scenic River Study was completed in 1979, pursuant to the National Wild and Scenic Rivers Act as amended by Public Law 93-621. The study recommends that a 192-mile segment of the Owyhee River extending from the Duck Valley Indian Reservation to the Owyhee Reservoir be added to the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System, under administration of the Bureau of Land Management and the State of Oregon.

The South Fork of the Owyhee River was not included in the Owyhee Wild and Scenic River Study. However, the National Park Service has included the South Fork in its Nationwide Rivers Inventory, and Washington Instruction Memorandum No. 80-393 directs the Bureau to assess the suitability of this segment for inclusion in the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System.

In 1970 the state of Oregon designated the Owyhee River from the Idaho-Oregon state line to Three Forks and From Crooked Creek to the Owyhee Reservoir as State Scenic Waterways.

Within the Owyhee River complex 10 Wilderness Study Areas (WSAs) have been identified under the requirements of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976, Section 603. The BLM Interim Management Policy and Guidelines for Lands Under Wilderness Review (December, 1979) provide the basis for allowable management activities within WSAs.

Purpose and Scope

This recreation area management plan serves two purposes. It establishes management direction through a comprehensive set of actions that will provide the Owyhee a level of resource protection, development, and public use consistent with the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act and interim guidelines for managing wilderness study areas. This plan also sets forth a sequence for implementing the identified management actions.

This plan covers the 192 mile segment of the main stem Owyhee River included in the National Wild and Scenic River Study, and 50 miles of the South Fork Owyhee River listed in the Nationwide Rivers Inventory. The remaining 65 miles of the South Fork listed in the Nationwide Rivers Inventory are not included in this plan because they flow mainly through private land.

Relationship to Bureau Planning

The Owyhee River is a special recreation management area identified in the Vale District's Northern and Southern Malheur Management Framework Plans, and the Boise District's Owyhee and Bruneau Management Framework Plans. Its proposed designation and management as a wild and scenic river is consistent with each district's current land use recommendations and decisions.

Nevada's Elko BLM District administers portions of the South Fork Owyhee River and is scheduled to complete a draft resource management plan in fiscal year 1986. However, the Elko District will advance its planning for this river segment, enabling one river plan to be prepared for the South Fork and main stem.

Setting and Multiple Resource Values Location

The main stem of the Owyhee River included in this plan flows 192 miles from the Duck Valley Indian Reservation in Idaho to slackwater of the Owyhee Reservoir in Oregon. The portion of the South Fork Owyhee River included in the plan begins in Nevada at the YP Ranch, 22 miles from the Idaho border. After entering Idaho, the South Fork flows 28 miles to its confluence with the main stem below Crutcher's Crossing (See Fig. 1).

Access

The Upper-Section: Main Stem to Three Forks, and South Fork (Refer to Fig. 1 and 2)

Above Three Forks, access to the main stem is located 12 miles within the Duck Valley Indian Reservation and at Garat Crossing where the El Paso Natural Gas pipeline crosses the river. There are three main access points to the South Fork. These are: 1) at the El Paso Natural Gas Pipeline crossing in Nevada, 2) at the YP Ranch in Nevada, and 3) at the 45 Ranch in Idaho. Access to both pipeline crossings requires the use of four-wheel drive vehicles within the canyons. The put-in points at the 45 Ranch, YP Ranch and Duck Valley Indian Reservation can be reached with a high clearance, two-wheel drive vehicle and the approval of the property owners or officials of the reservation. All principal access routes may be unusable during periods in the spring due to muddy road conditions.

There are several other low-standard roads which drop over the canyon rims to provide secondary access to the river's edge. The secondary access most commonly used for a river put-in is Crutcher's Crossing, located on the main stem two miles upstream from its confluence with the South Fork. This put in requires the use of high clearance, four-wheel drive vehicles within the canyon. Crutcher's Crossing provides the only reasonable access to the Owyhee River from the north, and the shortest shuttle opportunities for trips to Three Forks and beyond.

Middle Section: Main Stem from Three Forks to Rome (Refer to Fig. 3 and 4)

A well maintained road leads south from Highway 95 to the rim at Three Forks, where a rough road passable by high clearance vehicles descends to the river's edge. There is no road access to the river from Three Forks to the U.S. 95 crossing at Rome. The BLM has developed a scenic overlook 15 miles downstream from Three Forks.

Lower Section: Main Stem from Rome to Leslie Gulch (Refer to Fig. 5)

A short graveled spur leads to a developed river access just south of the U.S. 95 bridge crossing at Rome. Parking, camping and sanitation facilities are available. Below Rome four dirt roads provide secondary vehicle access to the river. Each of the roads, Bogus Creek, Hole-in-the-Ground, Birch Creek and Black Rocks, require the use of high clearance vehicles. The Bogus Creek and Black Rocks roads also require the use of four wheel drive. All of these roads traverse private land and rancher permission is required for access.

The final takeout is at Leslie Gulch on the Owyhee Reservoir. Twelve miles of slackwater must be crossed to reach Leslie Gulch. Recreation facilities include a boat ramp, restrooms, parking area, camping area, fish cleaning facilities and trash receptacles.

Foot Access

There are no regularly maintained foot trails into the canyon. However, the stream can be reached by way of draws and breaks in the rim, especially along the main stem above Three Forks and along the South Fork. Many miles of the canyon are inaccessible from the rim because of near vertical cliffs. This is particularly true in the section from Three Forks to China Gulch near Rome, and below the confluence of the South Fork downstream to Louse Canyon. Although there are no foot trails along the canyon bottom, most of the distance can be hiked during low water using game trails and by wading the stream bed.

Area Size and Ownership

Main Stem Owyhee River

Of the total land area on the main stem within one-quarter mile of the river corridor, six percent (3,760 acres) is privately owned. The remaining land is in public ownership and administered by the federal government (87 percent) or states (seven percent). Most (3,000 acres) of the privately owned land occurs in the vicinity of Rome. A few isolated private ownerships exist above and below Rome. The States of Idaho and Oregon also own a number of parcels. Oregon owns much of the rimrock and plateau lands along the north side of the river from Three Forks upstream to the Oregon/Idaho line. Acreages of different land ownerships are identified as follows:

South Fork Owyhee River

The South Fork Owyhee River to the YP Ranch in Nevada includes an additional 50 miles of river canyon which varies between one half (1/2) and one and one half (1 1/2) mile wide. Acreages of different land ownerships are identified as follows:

	Acres	Percent
Federal	53,380	87
State	4,300	7
Private	3,760	6
Total	61,440	100

	Acres	Percent
Federal	23,800	91
State	1,920	7
Private	280	2
Total	26,000	100

Physiography

The Owyhee River cuts a 200 to 1000 foot canyon into the high plateaus of the Owyhee Uplands, which cover northeast Nevada, southwest Idaho and southeast Oregon. The plateaus of the Owyhee Uplands are of volcanic origin and average 5,000 feet in elevation. They are flat to gently rolling, with the greatest topographic variations occurring north of the Owyhee River. The river has cut the basaltic and rhyolitic rocks of the plateaus into tightly meandering, U-shaped canyons, with alternating vertical walls and steep talus slopes.

Landscape Character

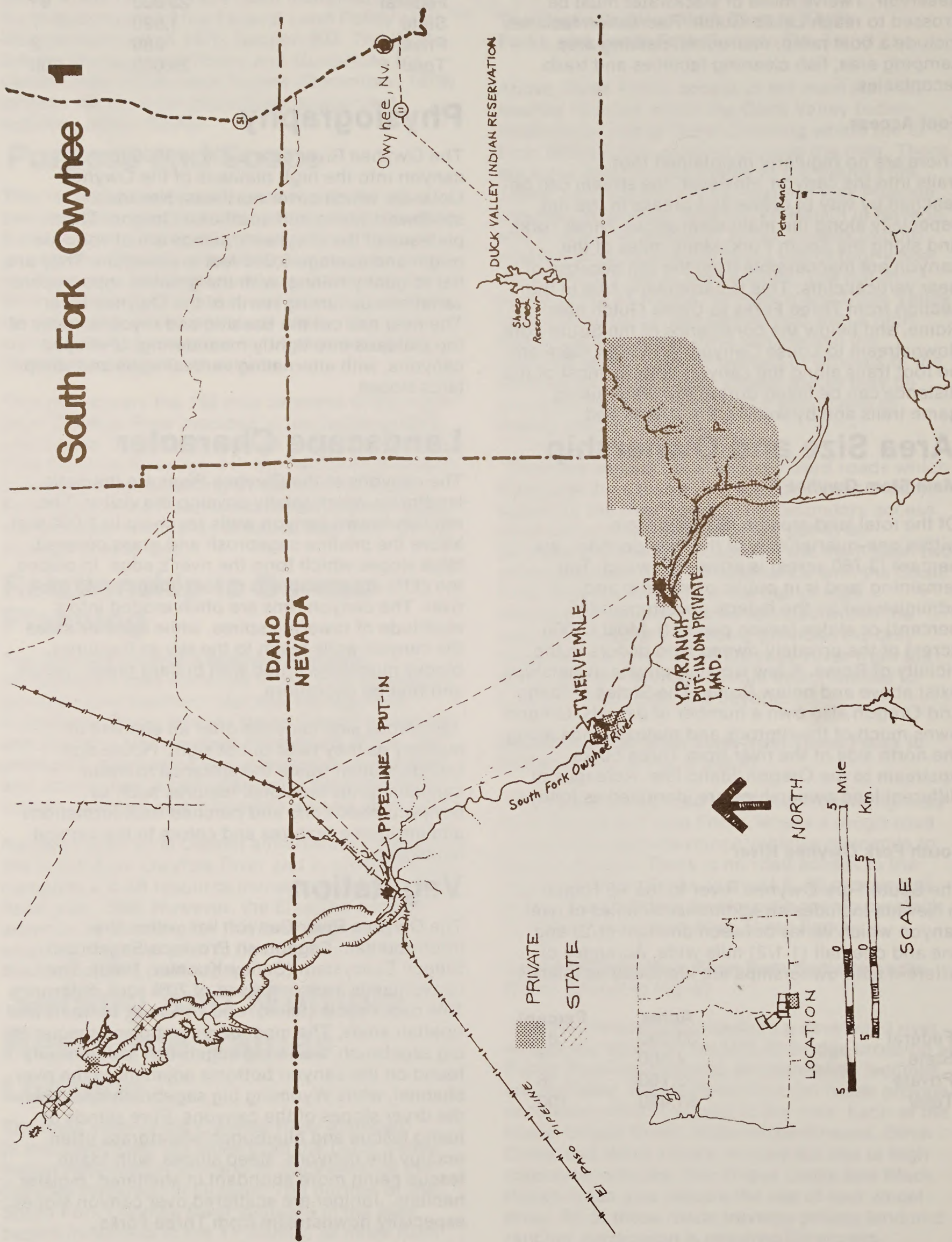
The canyons of the Owyhee River are dramatic landforms which totally envelop the visitor. The reddish-brown canyon walls reach up to 1,000 feet above the pristine sagebrush and grass covered talus slopes which form the river's edge. In places, the cliffs drop hundreds of feet directly into the river. The canyon rims are often eroded into a multitude of towering spires, while in other areas the canyon walls reach to the sky as fractured, blocky monoliths tinted with brilliant green, yellow and orange microflora.

Numerous side canyons offer an element of mystery as they twist out of sight. House size boulders often frame the entrance to these canyons, while erosional features such as honeycombed cliffs and perched rock formations add intriguing textures and colors to the vertical landscape.

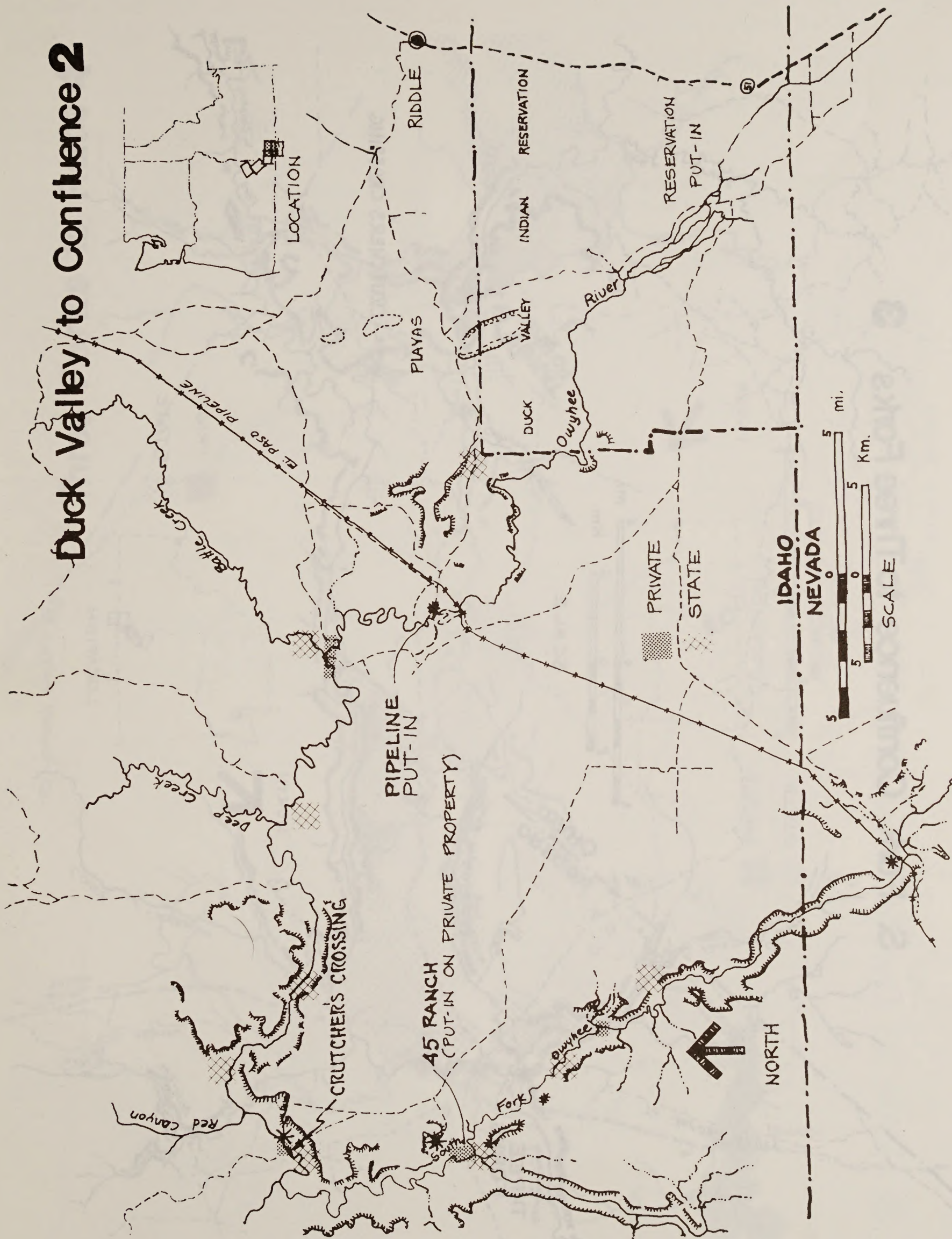
Vegetation

The Owyhee River Canyon lies within the Intermountain Sagebrush Province/Sagebrush Steppe Ecosystem (Bailey-Kuchler, 1966). The canyonlands are comprised of 70% rock outcrop, 10% rock rubble (talus), and 20% river bottoms and riparian areas. The most dominant plant species is big sagebrush. Basin big sagebrush is commonly found on the canyon bottoms adjacent to the river channel, while Wyoming big sagebrush occupies the dryer slopes of the canyons. Pure stands of Idaho fescue and bluebunch wheatgrass often occupy the canyons' steep slopes, with Idaho fescue being more abundant in sheltered, moister habitats. Juniper are scattered over canyon slopes, especially downstream from Three Forks.

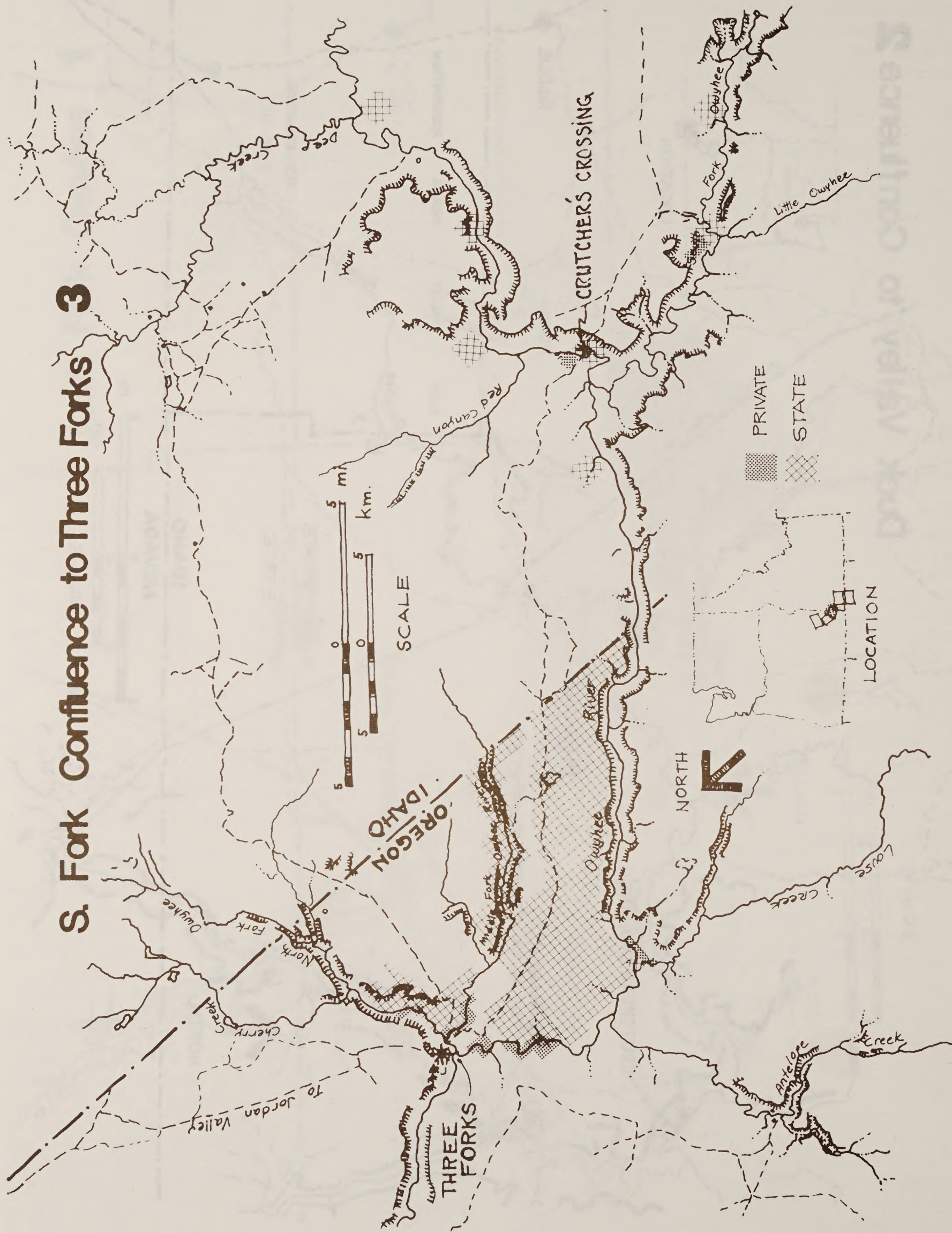
South Fork Owyhee 1



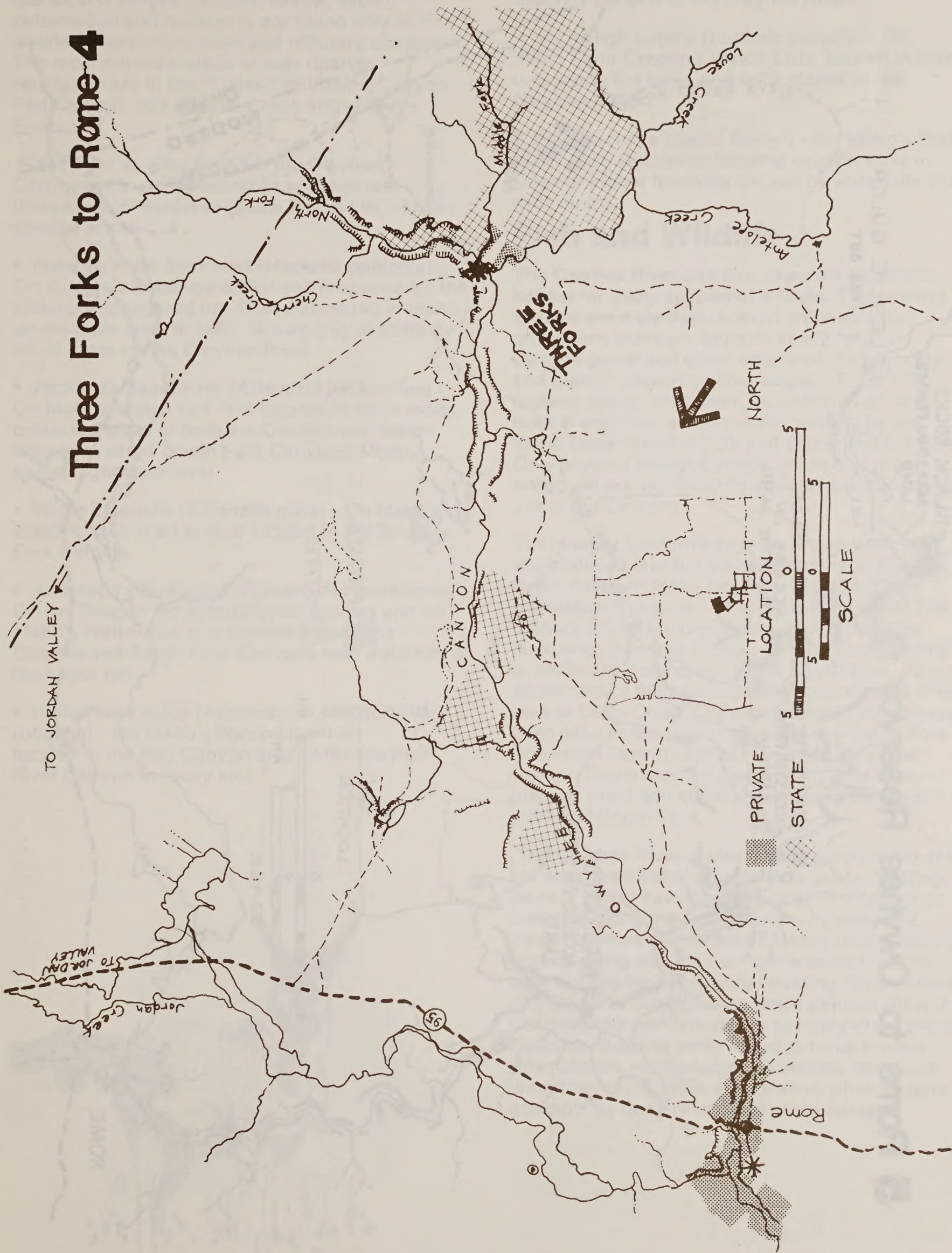
Duck Valley to Confluence 2



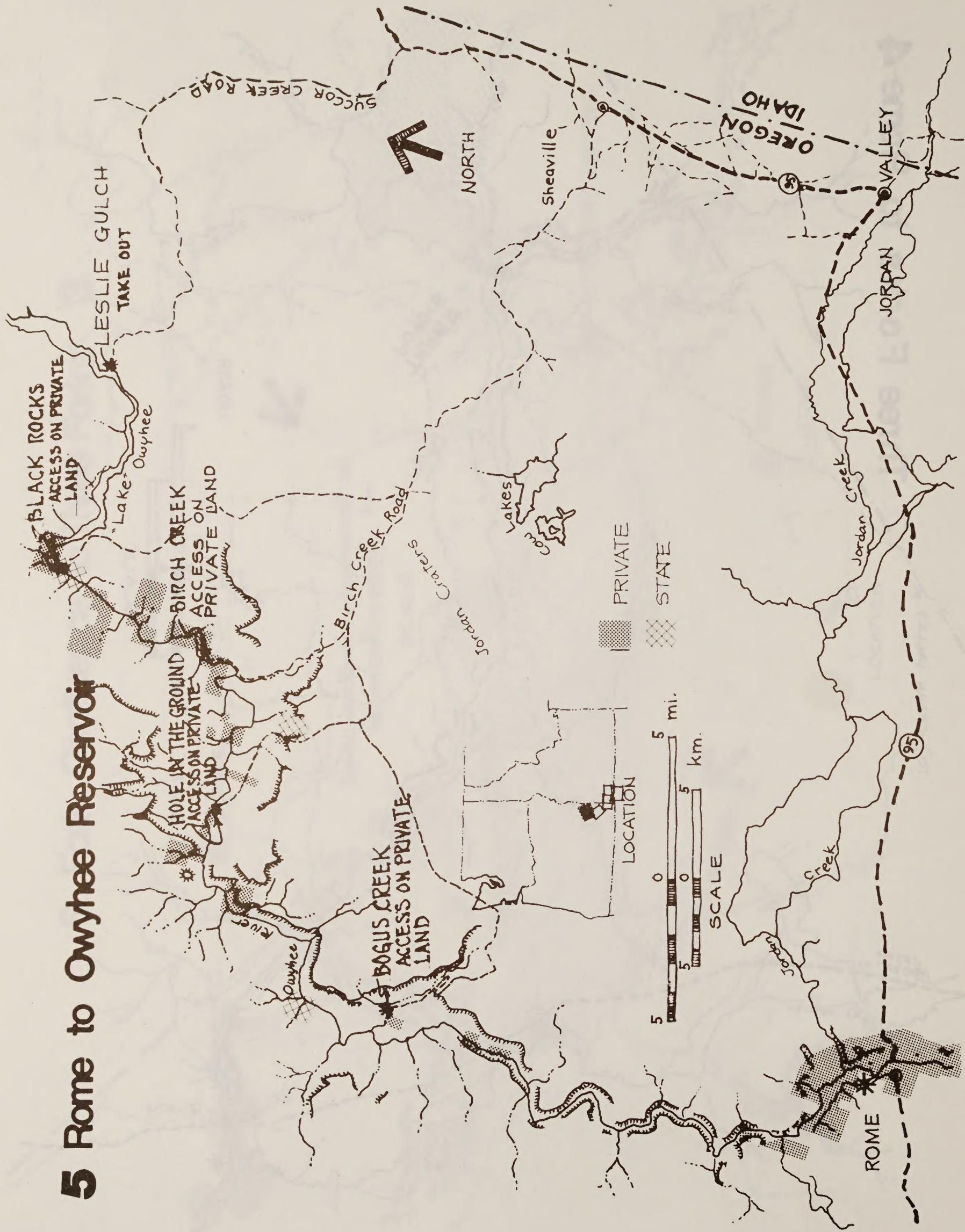
S. Fork Confluence to Three Forks 3



Three Forks to Rome 4



5 Rome to Owyhee Reservoir



The riparian areas of the canyons are generally very narrow and comprised mostly of grasses, rushes and sedges. Juniper, willow, aspen, cottonwood and hackberry are found only in isolated areas of the main and tributary canyons. The most notable areas of lush riparian vegetation are in the "Tulles", or Oxbow Canyon, Red Canyon, and Juniper Creek above Three Forks.

Eight plant species found in the Owyhee Canyonlands are classified as endangered, threatened, or sensitive (State Watch List). These species are:

- Owyhee River Stickseed (*Hackelia ophiobia*) - On Oregon's Endangered list and proposed for the Federal Endangered list. First discovered in Idaho on the main stem in 1981. Grows only in shaded moist areas on the Owyhee River.
- Packard's Sagebrush (*Artemisia packardiae*) - On Idaho's Watch List. It is located in more moist, protected areas of both the Owyhee and inside drainages of the South Fork Canyons. Mostly above high water level.
- White Eatonella (*Eatonella nivia*) - On Idaho's Watch List. It is an annual located in the South Fork Canyon.
- Anderson's Buttercup (*Ranunculus andersonii*) - On the Oregon list of threatened species and on Idaho's Watch List. It is located in both the Owyhee and South Fork Canyons near outcrops of the upper rim.
- Hedgehog cactus (*Pediocactus simpsonii* var. *robustio*) - On Idaho's Watch List. It is located in the Red Canyon area of the Owyhee River Canyon in rocky soil.



- Rigid Thread-stem (*Nemacladus rigidus*) - On Idaho's Watch List. It is located in Red Canyon, a tributary canyon of the Owyhee River.

- Inch-High Lupine (*Lupinus uncialis*) - On Idaho's and Oregon's Watch Lists. Known in Idaho only along the scree and talus slopes of the Owyhee River.

- Bailey's Ivesia (*Ivesia baileyi*) - On Idaho's State Watch List. Occurs on basaltic canyon walls in areas of higher humidity caused by waterfalls and river rapids.

Fish and Wildlife

The Owyhee River complex provides excellent habitat for many species of wildlife. The primary species are mule deer, bobcat, mountain lion, pronghorn antelope, bighorn sheep, chukar, Canada geese and other waterfowl, beaver, otter and raptors (mostly golden eagles). California bighorn sheep, river otter, mountain quail, and bobcat are listed as "sensitive" species by the Idaho Department of Fish and Game and the BLM. Only bighorn sheep, Canada geese and other waterfowl are significantly affected by recreational use of the canyons.

Thirty-eight California bighorn sheep were reintroduced into the main stem canyon near Battle Creek in Idaho between 1963-66. The population has grown to approximately 300. The bighorn sheep are distributed along the upper main stem from the El Paso Natural Gas Pipeline to below the confluence of the South Fork. About 30 percent of the population is concentrated in the area of Deep Creek Canyon. Recently sheep have been seen in the lower canyon of the South Fork. The Idaho Department of Fish and Game and Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife have plans to plant additional sheep along the main stem and South Fork.

The Owyhee River is also a rich reproductive area for waterfowl, especially Canada geese. Nesting pairs of geese have been reported at intervals of one mile along the river shoreline. Geese and other waterfowl are in their nesting, brood rearing and moulting periods during the same time the river is used for recreational boating. Observations of geese and ducks during these periods show that nesting pairs and broods are severely disturbed by river use. Boating parties tend to force broods downstream, scattering or displacing immature waterfowl along miles of shoreline, often despite attempts by floaters to avoid close contact.



Squawfish, chiselmouth, shiners, dace, and bridge-lip and coarsescale suckers are native to the river. The native redband trout may also exist. The Oregon State Department of Fish and Wildlife has successfully introduced channel catfish, smallmouth bass, and other spiny rayed fish. Efforts to introduce rainbow trout have been only marginally successful.

Prior to the development of the Owyhee Dam, chinook and coho salmon, steelhead trout, and other anadromous fish migrated from the Pacific Ocean upstream through the Columbia-Snake Systems into the Owyhee River. The construction of that and other dams downstream on the Snake stopped these migrations.

Cultural Resources

The upper Owyhee River Canyon and surrounding plateaus are rich in historic homesteads and prehistoric sites. Most of the historic resources lie on private property near the confluences of Louse Canyon, Battle Creek, Oxbow Canyon, the East Little Owyhee River (45 Ranch) and at Twelve Mile, Coyote Hole and Crutcher's Crossing. Historic sites on the private properties typically consist of one or more stone buildings with partially collapsed sod roofs supported by juniper logs, or of log cabins constructed of well weathered junipers carved with names and dates of yearly visitors and settlers. Other features include waterwheels, old wagons, wooden water pipes, juniper-brush corrals, old wood stoves, and numerous tin cans and miscellaneous metal pieces.

Many petroglyphs are found within the canyon below Three Forks, and archaeological sites are numerous along the rims of the canyons. Prehistoric sites are also found in caves or beneath rock overhangs located above high water lines. Evidence of prehistoric use at these sites is limited chiefly to stone tools and the chips produced in tool making.

An archaeological survey of the main stem from Rome to the the reservoir located 102 sites, which indicated that the river area was intensively utilized by Native Americans. Other limited work has been done on the river between the Oregon-Idaho boundary and Rome. This work showed that Native Americans were also using the upper stretch of the river, but not as intensively as the stretch below Rome.

In the summer of 1973, Dirty Shame Rockshelter, which is located on a tributary of the Owyhee River was excavated by a crew from the University of Oregon. They concluded that it was occupied from 9500 to 400 years ago. Basketry, sandals, and projectile point types indicated that its cultural affinities were with the Northern Great Basin.

River patrols have noted that some petroglyphs and nearly one half of the known prehistoric sites have been defaced, illegally dug or pot-hunted for artifacts. Many of the historic sites have suffered the theft of smaller artifacts such as cans, bottles, leather items, and miscellaneous tools. Larger items such as wagon parts have also disappeared.

Recreation

The Owyhee river system offers outstanding primitive recreation opportunities that provide a very high degree of solitude and physical challenge. The principal recreation activities are river running, fishing and hunting. Recently there has been an increased interest in backpacking, particularly in the major tributary canyons of the main stem.

The river system offers whitewater opportunities with a difficulty of Class I through Class VI (international scale) from February through June. Though the whitewater difficulty is varied, the remoteness of the area coupled with a number of rapids and rock falls in the river require visitors to be experienced and properly equipped.

Secondary activities associated with river running include photography, wildlife viewing, general sightseeing and hiking.



Wilderness Study Areas

The main stem and South Fork Owyhee River canyonlands are the predominate landforms for ten (10) Wilderness Study Areas (WSAs), totalling approximately 530,000 acres. Each WSA was found to be natural in character and to provide outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation due in large part to the wilderness quality of the canyonlands.

The WSAs are being studied to determine if they are suitable for wilderness designation. The Boise District's Owyhee and Bruneau Management Framework Plans (MFPs) have tentatively identified portions of the six WSAs within Idaho as suitable for wilderness designation. The Vale District's Southern and Northern Malheur Management Framework Plans have tentatively identified portions of the three WSAs within Oregon as suitable for wilderness designation. The Elko District's Elko Management Framework Plan has tentatively identified portions of the one WSA within Nevada as suitable for wilderness designation. Final wilderness recommendations will be submitted to the Secretary of the Interior for eventual congressional action. Until the wilderness review process has been completed, these areas must be managed so as not to impair their suitability for preservation as wilderness, subject to certain exceptions and conditions. The management of the WSAs is discussed in detail in the BLM Interim Management Policy and Guidelines for Lands Under Wilderness Review (December, 1979).

Water Rights

Many individuals or entities in Nevada, Idaho, and Oregon own and claim rights to the waters of the main stem, mostly for agricultural purposes. In Oregon, these rights have been adjudicated and, as of 1976, 195 had been perfected and another 19 were in the application stage. New water diversion facilities in Oregon must comply with the Scenic Waterways Act as administered by the State Water Resources Director. The rights in Nevada and Idaho have not yet been adjudicated.

The largest upstream water withdrawals occur in the Duck Valley Indian Reservation where 12,000 acres are irrigated from the river. The waters are collected in Wild Horse Reservoir, located 20 miles south of the reservation in Nevada, and then released into the river where a portion of the flow is diverted for irrigation. Within the reservation two smaller reservoirs (Sheep Creek and Mountain View) have been developed for recreation purposes, chiefly trout fishing and camping. Other withdrawals occur on the South Fork in Nevada, and at the 45 Ranch in Idaho.

The adjudicated or claimed water rights to the main stem and South Fork exceed average flow. If all rights were simultaneously exercised the effect on the river would be to virtually dewater it. Any remaining flow would result largely from irrigation returns. For example, it is estimated that 80 percent of the water utilized for irrigation on the Duck Valley Indian Reservation returns to the river. However, full utilization of water rights has yet to occur.

Range (Livestock)

The main stem and South Fork serve as boundaries between a number of cattle allotments operating on the surrounding plateaus. Cattle enter the canyons each year for water and to graze the abundant grasses found along the river and on reachable canyon slopes. Because of its less severe topography, the South Fork Canyon is more accessible and receives the heaviest use. Due to the ruggedness of the canyons ranchers have difficulty removing livestock, consequently a number of cattle have remained in the canyons year round.



The year round concentrated use of canyon bottom lands by unauthorized livestock, as well as seasonal concentrations by authorized livestock, has caused a decline in vegetative condition along certain portions of the river. However, this problem is limited to areas where livestock access exists, and vegetation in most of the canyon is generally in good to excellent or pristine condition. In addition to their effects upon vegetation, cattle often starve or drown when high water traps them against impassable canyon walls. Dead cattle along the shoreline or among rocks in the river are a common occurrence, particularly on the South Fork.

Minerals

Bureau of Land Management records show that no patented mining claims are located along the Owyhee River, nor are there any known potentially mineable metallic or nonmetallic mineral deposits. The geologic environment of the river corridor indicates a low favorability for mineralization. The area is covered by a thick mantle of unmineralized material. There is interest in dredging for gold from the river bed in Idaho. Opal and jasper are also sought within the canyon complex.

Deposits of zeolite fluorspar derived from altered volcanic tuft occur within the Rome and Sheaville Zeolite Districts in the vicinity of the canyonlands in Oregon. These deposits are out of sight from a river view point and their development would not detract from the scenic quality of the canyons. Compliance with existing Federal and State water quality laws would prevent any significant reduction in water quality of the Owyhee River.

Mining for chalcedonic quartz has occurred on several claims within the Owyhee Canyon, such as Crutcher's Crossing. Some mining activity has also occurred at the 45 Ranch on the South Fork.

Energy and Utilities

Oil and gas leasing applications have been received for much of the canyonlands and surrounding plateaus within Oregon, Idaho and Nevada. Leases are being issued with stipulations prohibiting surface occupancy and disturbance within the canyonlands.

The Owyhee River is in the area of the ancient Miocene Humboldt and Bruneau Lakes, indicating a potential for underlying petroleum bearing rock strata. However, there is no direct evidence that the area is favorable for oil and gas resources. Even if Paleozoic rock strata lie at depth, it is likely that any associated hydrocarbons were driven off during the more recent Tertiary thermal episodes which formed the area's thick mantle of rhyolite and basalt rocks.

The Owyhee River in Oregon is a portion of an important geothermal resource area known as the Battle Mountain Heartflow High. The area currently is being investigated and evaluated for its geothermal potential. The proximity of several hot springs and a recent history of volcanic activity indicates energy development potential, although no sites of commercial potential have been found within the Owyhee River canyon.

The El Paso Natural Gas Pipeline crosses the Owyhee River approximately 13 miles downstream from the Duck Valley Indian Reservation. It also crosses the South Fork of the Owyhee approximately four miles south of the Idaho-Nevada border. The current right-of-way is 25 feet wide. However, the pipeline is within a one quarter mile wide utility corridor established within the Boise and Elko Districts. Within the Vale District, a utility corridor is identified crossing the Owyhee in the vicinity of Rome, Oregon. Environmental assessments will have to be prepared prior to issuing any rights-of-way within this corridor.

Military Operations

The entire southwest portion of Idaho is designated by the Department of Defense and the Federal Aviation Administration as a Military Operations Area (MOA). This MOA is used for training military pilots in low elevation, subsonic flight in mostly fighter-bomber type aircraft. The U.S. Air Force projects multiple flights per day over different flight patterns at elevations as low as 100 feet above the surface of the tablelands surrounding the canyons. It is also projected that low elevation flights of B-52 bombers will occur throughout the canyon complex in Idaho and Oregon.

User Profile and Visitation Estimates Recreation Activity Preference

Outstanding recreational opportunities are available in the canyons, including drift boating, rafting, kayaking, hiking, photography, nature study, rockhounding, fishing, hunting, and camping. The Owyhee is rapidly becoming recognized as a prime early-season whitewater river and is becoming increasingly popular with both commercial and noncommercial boaters.

Information collected during the National River Recreation Study in 1980 (see Appendix B) indicates that most boaters visited the river to run rapids, view scenery and to camp. About 50% of the boaters also enjoyed visiting archaeological and historical sites, and 42% liked to do some hiking during rest or overnight stops.

Fishing is fair in the Owyhee River, with trout populations concentrated around the confluences of side drainages. Hunting is good to excellent for mule deer, California bighorn sheep, chukar partridge and quail.

Vehicles and Other Specialized Equipment

Most boating is done by raft or kayak, while a few boating parties use canoes. Light, good quality rafts (up to 14 feet long) are preferred due to several difficult rapids and portages.

The National River Recreation Study determined that 75% of the boats used by noncommercial parties on the Owyhee during 1980 were rafts and 19% were kayaks. Rafts made up 96% of boats used by outfitters.

Two-wheel drive vehicles can be used for access on the uppermost put-in point on the main stem within the Duck Valley Indian Reservation, the South Fork at the YP Ranch in Nevada and the 45 Ranch in Idaho, Three Forks, Rome and Leslie Gulch. Four-wheel drive vehicles are needed for boating access at all other access points. Hunting

is also facilitated by the use of four-wheel drives, while backpackers can get by with conventional, preferably high clearance vehicles.

Seasons and Times of Use

The river can be floated during the high water period from February through June. Cold and stormy weather in February and March discourages use during these months. The length of the boating season depends on winter snowpack and will vary from year to year. However, most of the boating use on the river occurs over a six week period, from May 1 to June 15. Very high use levels have been reported over the Memorial Day weekend (refer to Graph 1).

After extremely dry winters, such as 1977, there is not enough run-off to permit extended boating use of the river. As with most free flowing rivers, peak flows during normal years make boating unsafe for short periods of time.

Hunting and fishing seasons vary between the three states through which the main stem and South Fork Owyhee Rivers flow. Before engaging in hunting or fishing, visitors must contact the Oregon, Idaho and Nevada Departments of Fish and Wildlife in order to comply with each state's hunting and fishing laws.

Table 1 - 1982 Visitor Use Summary

Three Forks-Rome

	No. of Visitors	No. of Groups	Visitor Days	Avg. Group Size	Avg. Length of Stay
Commercial	114	11	385	10.4	3.4
Noncommercial	239	49	742	4.9	3.1
Total	353	60	1127	5.9	3.2

Below Rome

	No. of Visitors	No. of Groups	Visitor Days	Avg. Group Size	Avg. Length of Stay
Commercial	325	30	1529	10.8	4.7
Noncommercial	936	147	3670	6.4	3.9
Total	1261	177	5199	7.1	4.1

Total Middle and Lower River

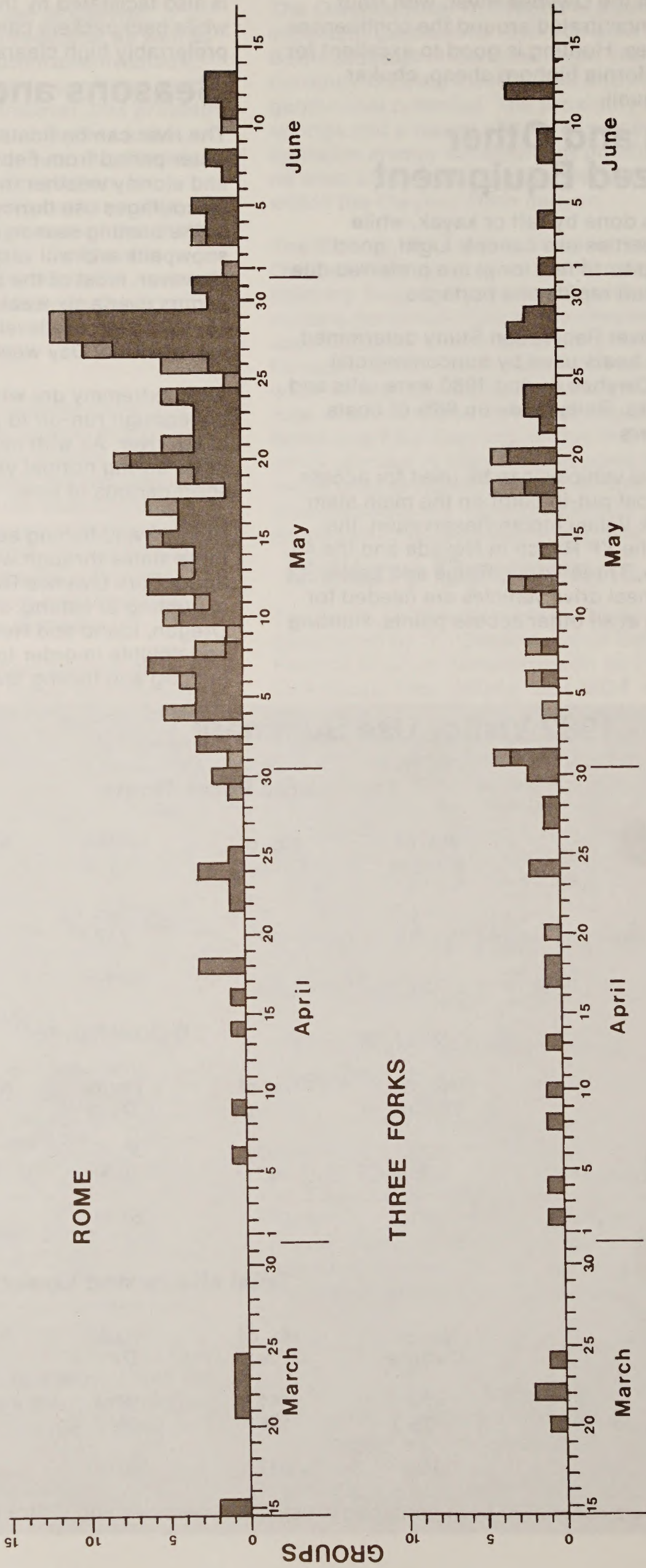
	No. of Visitors	No. of Groups	Visitor Days	Avg. Group Size	Avg. Length of Stay
Commercial	439	41	1914	10.7	4.4
Noncommercial	1175	196	4412	6.0	3.8
Total	1614	237	6326	4.9	4.0

Information was compiled from permit post-use questionnaires and visitor register totals.

Graph I

NUMBER of LAUNCHES -1982 SEASON

Commercial
Non-Commercial



Length of Stay

For boaters starting at the uppermost put-in points, on the mainstem and South Fork, and taking out at Three Forks, the average length of stay is six days; for those starting at Crutcher's Crossing near the confluence of the South Fork, a boat trip to Three Forks takes three days.

Boaters utilizing the Three Forks to Rome section average three day float trips, while visitors on the Rome to Leslie Gulch section average five days to complete the trip (refer to Table 1).

The average length of stay for big game hunters within the Owyhee River canyon complex is four days.

Party Size

Above Three Forks the average party size for non-commercial boaters is eight to nine people, while the size of commercial boating parties averages 10 people. The special recreation permits issued by the BLM for commercial boating use stipulate that the size of commercial parties not exceed 16 people.

From Three Forks to Rome, the average non-commercial boating party consists of four to five people; while the commercial party size is from ten to eleven people (refer to Table 1). Through

special recreation permits, the BLM has limited the group size of commercial parties to 20 people.

From Rome to Leslie Gulch, the average non-commercial party size is six to seven persons; while the commercial party size is from 10 to 12. The group size of commercial users on this segment has also been limited to 20 people.

There are no estimates of the average party sizes for other types of recreation activities.

Place of Origin

The National River Recreation Study found that in 1980, 60% of the boaters lived in Oregon, 14% were from Idaho, 12% from Washington, 7% from California, and 7% lived in other states.

Most backpackers came from Idaho and Oregon, while most hunters were residents of the state within which use occurred. Some out of state big game hunters do visit the canyons in search of trophies.

Visitation Estimates

The BLM has been recording boating use data on the middle and lower Owyhee since 1974. From 482 people in 1974, river use climbed to 2057 people in 1980. The following discussion details use estimates for the 1982 boating season, the second highest use level on record (refer to Table 2).

Table 2 - Annual Visitor Use 1974 through 1982

Three Forks to Rome	74*	75*	76*	77*+	78#	79#	80-	81=+	82=
Commercial	25	14	34	0	107	118	219	5	114
Noncommercial	60	60	50	30	82	204	263	23	239
Total	85	74	84	30	189	322	482	28	353
Below Rome									
Commercial	237	233	264	0	412	438	771	90	525
Noncommercial	160	250	390	50	388	721	800	50	938
Total	397	483	654	50	800	1161	1571	140	1261
Total Middle and Lower River									
Commercial	262	247	298	0	519	556	990	95	439
Noncommercial	220	310	440	80	470	927	1063	73	1175
Total	482	557	738	80	989	1483	2053	168	1614

* Figures from Vale District Owyhee River Visitor Statistics, 1974 through 1977, by G. Meyer.

+ Low numbers due to low water flow

Non-commercial figures from Owyhee River Register; commercial figures from Recreation Use Permit Post Used Questionnaire

- Figures from National River Recreation Use Survey, USFS, North Central Forest Experiment Station, St. Paul, MN.

= Figures from Owyhee River Register

Upper Segment: Main Stem Above Three Forks and South Fork

In 1982, seven special recreation use permits were issued for noncommercial boating above Three Forks. Under this voluntary noncommercial permit system it is estimated that only one third of noncommercial boating parties obtain permits. Based on telephone information requests an estimated 20 to 30 noncommercial parties, totalling 160 to 270 boaters, floated the Owyhee River above Three Forks during the 1982 boating season.

Regulations established by the Idaho Outfitters and Guides Board limit the number of commercial boating operations allowed on specific rivers within Idaho. The regulations provide that no more than seven commercial outfitters are allowed on the main stem of the Owyhee from the Duck Valley Indian Reservation to the Oregon stateline, and that four outfitters are allowed on the South Fork from the Nevada stateline to the Oregon stateline. An Idaho state license is needed to obtain a BLM special recreation use permit for commercial boating on the main stem or South Fork in Idaho. Of the six companies licensed to run commercial trips on the upper segments of the Owyhee, five obtained BLM permits in 1982. Four of these outfitters took five commercial trips with a total of 50 people.

Middle Segment: Three Forks to Rome

BLM special recreation use permits for the middle and lower river segments were issued to 55 commercial outfitters in 1982. Eleven commercial trips totalling 114 persons floated from Three Forks to Rome. Although recreation permits are not required for noncommercial boaters, 49 noncommercial trips totalling 239 persons registered voluntarily to float this segment (refer to Table 1).

Lower Segment: Rome to Owyhee Reservoir

Thirty commercial groups totalling 325 persons floated from Rome to the Owyhee Reservoir in 1982. One hundred forty seven noncommercial parties totalling 936 persons registered voluntarily for this stretch of the river. An estimated total of 177 groups and 1,261 persons floated the lower segment of the main stem in 1982 (refer to Table 1).

Total whitewater visitor use on the three river segments between March 1 to June 30 is estimated at 271 groups and 1,940 people. Of this use, 19% occurred on the upper segment, 18% on the middle segment, and 63% on the lower segment.

Fishing use is light and is done in conjunction with backpacking, hunting and late season boat trips. There are no estimates of the amount of hunting and backpacking use that occurs within the canyons of the main stem or South Fork.

Major Issues

The recognition and resolution of important issues is the key to successful planning and management. This section identifies critical issues to be considered in the management plan presented in Part III.

Issue 1 - Level and Degree of Administrative Control Comment

Recent increases in recreation use and potential energy exploration are among the factors that have focused attention on the need to more closely manage use of the Owyhee River. The degree of management and methods of administration needed require thorough examination.

Considerations Administration

- River Segment Management Jurisdiction
- Recreation Special Use Permits and Noncommercial Party Registration
- Proposed Wild and Scenic River Designation

Supervision

- Visitor Use Supervision
- Visitor Use Allocation System and Fee Schedule
- Recreational Use Monitoring
- River Information and Education Program
- Search and Rescue

River Craft Conflicts

- Types of River Craft Allowed

Road Access

- New Access Development
- Upgrading existing roads

Facility Management

- Future Developments
- Sign Program
- Staff Water Gauges

Issue II - Environmental Protection

Comment

The Owyhee River possesses resource values of national significance. Its natural and cultural features are deceptively fragile, and require protection from excessive recreation, grazing and other potentially damaging uses.

Considerations

Natural Values

- Off Road Vehicle Use
- Livestock Grazing Within Canyon
- Land and Mineral Entry in River Corridor
- Mining Claim Regulation
- Construction of Water Impoundments
- Recreation Use Conflicts
- Military Aircraft - Low Level Flights

Wildlife Values

- Wildlife Populations and Threatened and Endangered (T&E) Plants

Cultural Values

- Cultural Resources Survey
- Site Protection

Issue III - Land Ownership

Comment

Of the total land area on the Owyhee and South Fork Owyhee Rivers (87,440 acres), 88 percent or 77,180 acres is public land, seven percent or 6,220 acres is state land, and five percent or 4,040 acres is private land. Land ownership patterns should be studied to determine if realty actions would facilitate river management.

Considerations

Acquisition/Easements

- Scenic Easements Across Private Lands
- Acquisition of Idaho State Lands

Access

- Access Easements on Private Land

Withdrawal Review

- Power Site Withdrawals
- Bureau of Reclamation Withdrawals

Issue IV - Management Cooperation Between Agencies

Comment

While most of the land along the Owyhee is managed by BLM, several other Federal, State and local government agencies have vested interests in the resources on the Owyhee River and its surrounding lands and waters. BLM cannot effectively manage the river area without interagency support and cooperation, and should explore ways of improving formal communication regarding river management.

Considerations

Management Agreements with Federal Agencies

- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- Bureau of Reclamation
- Federal Energy Regulatory Commission
- Bureau of Indian Affairs Duck Valley Indian Reservation
- Department of Defense - U.S. Air Force

Management Agreements with State Agencies

Oregon -

State Scenic Waterways Commission; State Marine Board; State Department of Fish and Wildlife; Department of State Lands; Water Resources Department; and State Historic Preservation Office.

Idaho -

Outfitters and Guides Board; Department of Fish and Game; Department of Lands; Department of Water Resources; and State Historic Preservation Office.

Nevada -

Department of Wildlife; State Historic Preservation Office; and Conservation and Natural Resources Department.

Management Agreements with Local Agencies

Malheur County, Oregon
Owyhee County, Idaho
Elko County, Nevada

Part II - Management Objectives and Constraints



Management Objective

The mainstem and South Fork Owyhee River will be managed to preserve their wild and primitive qualities. Visitor and resource management will strive to enhance opportunities for high quality, primitive recreation experiences. Recreation and other resource uses will be permitted to the extent that natural and cultural characteristics of the river environment are not degraded.

The following objectives will guide future management and use of the Owyhee River Canyon. In accomplishing objectives, the BLM will involve and cooperate with other public agencies, private interests and resource users.

Resource Management

- Manage the river canyon to protect its primitive environment. Maintain a natural setting that provides outstanding opportunities for solitude and for primitive and unconfined recreation activities. Management should strictly adhere to BLM guidelines for managing Wilderness Study Areas, and Oregon's regulations for designated state scenic waterways.

- As required by the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, maintain the free flowing condition of the mainstem and South Fork Owyhee River. Water quality will be maintained in accordance with state and federal water quality standards.
- Manage the river canyon to protect the habitats for fish and wildlife species. Cooperate with the Oregon, Idaho and Nevada Department of Fish and Game in protecting and restoring habitats for fish and wildlife, with particular emphasis given to bighorn sheep, river otter, and Canada geese.
- Manage the river canyons to protect significant cultural resource sites. Cooperate with State Historic Preservation Offices to protect and stabilize resources on state and private lands.
- Negotiate to obtain appropriate easements through state or private land when necessary to protect the canyon environment, or preserve recreation use. Complete the Idaho State Land Exchange with the BLM, Boise District.
- Manage livestock use in a manner that will not adversely affect the natural, recreational and cultural values of the river canyons.

- Operations on existing valid mineral rights, future mining claims and oil and gas leases will be accomplished under regulations designed to protect natural, cultural and recreational resources, and in accordance with the Oregon State Scenic Waterways Act, where applicable.

Recreation Management

- Manage recreation use in keeping with the capacity of the canyons to sustain a high quality primitive experience (Recreation Opportunity Spectrum Class Descriptions, Appendix E). Determine use levels that will provide a primitive recreational experience with a high degree of solitude and minimal effect upon the natural canyon environment.
- Manage recreation use in the canyons to protect wildlife habitats and endangered plant species. Determine use levels which will optimize recreation opportunities without endangering wildlife and plant populations.
- Provide minimum public use facilities and road access to fulfill management needs.
- Monitor and evaluate visitor and resource management programs to identify needed plan modifications.
- Establish a mandatory permit system for noncommercial users only when monitoring indicates use capacities are being reached and no other management options are effective.
- Develop an information program to aid visitor and resource management. The program should focus on visitor safety; visitor awareness of natural and cultural resources and; environmentally acceptable visitor behavior to protect natural and cultural resources.

Management Constraints

Factors which, because of law, policy, regulation or circumstances (see Appendix C) influence the development of a management program presented in Part III include:

- The Owyhee River is being considered for National Wild and Scenic River status;
- Portions of the river corridor are included within ten Wilderness Study Areas (WSAs);
- Two river segments are presently designated as Oregon Scenic Waterways (ORS 390.805 to 390.925);
- The South Fork Owyhee River is listed on the Nationwide Rivers Inventory;

- Power Site and Bureau of Reclamation withdrawals on river corridor lands consist of approximately 66% of Oregon's river segments;
- Several plant species listed as "sensitive" occur within the river corridor;
- Many significant historic and prehistoric sites exist within the canyon complex;
- Bighorn sheep are reestablished in the upper reaches of the Owyhee canyon complex;
- Vehicle access is limited throughout much of the river area;
- There are a limited number of large campsites on the middle and lower sections of the river;
- Many of the whitewater rapids on the Owyhee River are hazardous to novice river visitors;
- Limited escape cover exists for waterfowl;
- The Military Operations Area (MOA), including low level B-52 bomber flights.

Part III - The Management Plan



The management program involves 27 distinct actions to resolve issues and accomplish management objectives. The four major issues identified and discussed in Part I are listed below, along with the planned management actions. Alternatives to the actions discussed in this section are presented in Appendix D.

Issue I - Level and Degree of Administrative Control Administration

Action I.A.1. - River Segment Management Jurisdiction

The Boise District will administer boating use upstream from Three Forks, and will coordinate with the Elko District in administering boating use on the South Fork. The Vale District will manage boating use from Three Forks downstream.

Discussion

With the exception of one put-in point on the Duck Valley Indian Reservation, all boating access to the Owyhee River above Three Forks lies within the Boise District. From Three Forks to the Owyhee Reservoir all access is within the Vale District. Access to the South Fork is in both the Boise and Elko Districts. The administration of

river use should occur in the district(s) where access is available unless delegated to an adjoining district through a cooperative agreement.

Action I.A.2. - Special Recreation Use Permits and Noncommercial Party Registration

The adjoining BLM districts will coordinate issuance of special recreation use permits for boat trips which cross district boundaries. Only one permit will be needed for trips within one or more BLM districts with the permit being issued by the district where trip(s) originates. The Boise District may develop a cooperative agreement with the Elko District, to allow the Boise District to issue permits for South Fork trips starting in Nevada.

A permit system for noncommercial boaters will not be initiated until monitoring indicates such action is needed to control use or to protect resources. A mandatory boater registration system will be started in 1983 to gather use data and to provide information to boaters. Commercial operators must have appropriate state licenses prior to obtaining a BLM permit.



Discussion

Permits control access to the river and usually should be the responsibility of the district(s) with the access routes. Close coordination between districts is needed for permitted trips which cross district boundaries.

Action I.A.3. - Proposed Wild and Scenic River Designation

Support the designation of the Owyhee River from the western boundary of the Duck Valley Indian Reservation to the Owyhee Reservoir and the South Fork in Nevada and Idaho within the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System (NWSRS) under the administration of the BLM.

Discussion

The designation of the Owyhee River as a component to the NWSRS is compatible with management objectives contained in the Vale District's Northern Malheur and Southern Malheur Management Framework Plans (MFPs), Boise District's Owyhee and Bruneau MFPs and Elko District's Elko Resource Area MFP. It is also compatible with wilderness interim management and designation. The State Scenic Waterways committee supports wild and scenic river designation with the exception of the Rome Valley (China Gulch to Crooked Creek).

Supervision

Action I.B.1. - Visitor Use Supervision

Upper Section

The control period on the main stem above Three Forks and on the South Fork will normally be from April 1 to June 30. Flexibility will be used to change the control period as river flows and visitor use indicate. One start per day on the main stem and one start per day on the South Fork will be allowed on the upper Owyhee. Maximum group size will be 15 persons for commercial and noncommercial parties, including boatmen and support personnel.

Middle Section

The control period from Three Forks to Rome will normally be from April 1 to June 30. Flexibility will be used to adjust the control period for river flow and visitor use. Four starts per day will be allowed on the middle Owyhee with a maximum group size of 15 persons for commercial and noncommercial parties, including boatmen and support personnel.

Lower Section

The control period from Rome to Leslie Gulch will normally be from April 1 to June 30. Flexibility will be used to adjust the control period for river flow and visitor use. Six starts per day will be allowed on the lower Owyhee with a maximum group size of 20 persons for commercial and noncommercial parties, including boatmen and support personnel.

Discussion

The ability to provide proper recreation management depends upon knowing resource capabilities for withstanding visitor use. Three types of information are needed to determine correct visitor use capacities:

- Physical information about campsite frequency and size.
- Sociological information about the quality of recreation experiences and preferences.
- Environmental information about the impacts of visitors upon resources.

Physical capacity studies have been completed for the middle and lower river segments, but have not been conducted on the Upper Owyhee. A user preference survey has been conducted on all three river segments. Environmental data has not been collected on any river segment.

Until a user carrying capacity study is completed for the upper Owyhee an interim guideline of two starts per day will optimize opportunities for primitive recreation, and will preserve the natural and cultural values of this river segment.

In 1979, camping site data on the middle and lower river segments was gathered in the Owyhee River Carrying Capacity Study, conducted by the Organization for Recreational Resources Research and Consulting (ORRRC). The ORRRC study, coupled with historical use patterns and considerable public input, was the basis for establishing visitor use levels on the middle and lower sections of the Owyhee River. These use levels are subject to periodic review and adjustment (see Action I.B.3.).

During the 1980 boating season, sociological data on the upper, middle and lower river segments were gathered by the U.S. Forest Service's, Backcountry River Recreation Project. This study collected data on a wide range of subjects, including visitor group size, problems encountered, satisfaction and management preferences. Generally, the study found a high degree of satisfaction among river users on all river sections, and a preference for the minimum management level needed to protect the resource.

Historical use levels are lower than planned maximum daily use levels. In the near term the maximum allowable use limit should only impact visitor use during peak periods, such as the Memorial Day weekend. Future adjustments will occur if monitoring indicates environmental or social capacities are being exceeded, that additional capacity exists, or that increased supervision is needed to properly utilize the river's carrying capacity.

Action I.B.2. - Visitor Use Allocation System and Fee Schedules

Action Reserved

Discussion

A system to enforce visitor carrying capacities and allocate use among user groups will not be implemented until monitoring indicates that physical or social use levels are being reached, recreation use is causing unacceptable resource damage, or that national policy mandates an allocation system. Any allocation system must provide for the regulations of the Idaho Outfitters and Guides Board. The principles for implementing a recreation use allocation system will be developed in a national BLM policy. When the national BLM allocation policy is adopted district studies will be conducted to distribute unused starts and/or visitor days.

Commercial operators are currently under a fee schedule which is being reviewed at the national level. Fee structures for commercial and noncommercial use will also be developed in a national BLM policy.

Action I.B.3. - Recreational Use Monitoring

Monitor the resource impacts of recreation use through:

- Periodic river patrols by raft or kayak.
- Continuation of the campsite photo-point study began in the ORRRC inventory.
- A mandatory river registration program for all boaters; establishment of registration boxes at all put-ins.
- A mandatory recreation use permit for commercial users to authorize use.
- Recreation trip survey forms at all boater take-outs.
- Completion of post-use questionnaires by commercial permittees.
- Annual inspection of cultural sites.
- Long term vegetative trend studies.

Discussion

Monitoring is essential to correlate use levels with resource condition and capacity. Monitoring will precede establishment of a recreation use allocation system for commercial and noncommercial boaters.

Action I.B.4. - River Information and Education Program

Develop an information and education program for users that focuses on:

- Campsite locations and capacities.
- Visitor awareness of natural and cultural resources.
- Environmentally acceptable visitor behavior that will protect cultural resources, wildlife habitat and populations, the natural character of the river canyon, and the enjoyment of the area by recreationists.
- Visitor Safety.

Discussion

Providing information about how visitors can best conduct themselves could alleviate or minimize potential resource conflicts, as well as the need for additional management actions. These materials would also compliment the monitoring program.

Action I.B.5. - Search and Rescue

Establish cooperative search and rescue agreements between Vale, Boise and Elko BLM Districts and the respective sheriffs offices of Malheur, Owyhee and Elko Counties. The agreements will outline the responsibilities of these agencies and the amount and type of assistance the BLM can provide when requested by sheriffs offices.

Discussion

County sheriffs have primary responsibility for search and rescue. However, since BLM personnel are familiar with the area and BLM equipment may be most available, full cooperation and support should be given to sheriff departments.

River Craft Conflicts

Action I.C.1. - Types of River Craft Allowed

Allow no motorized boat travel on the main stem or South Fork upstream from Idaho-Oregon stateline. Coordinate with the Oregon State Marine Board to exclude motorized craft from the Oregon-Idaho stateline to the Owyhee Reservoir. The use of aircraft by commercial or noncommercial boating parties for purposes of shuttling equipment, supplies, and people will be prohibited. Aircraft may be authorized during search and rescue, other emergency operations and for wildlife management purposes. Existing airfields can continue to be used.

Discussion

Motors disturb the solitude and wildlife within the canyons and are not consistent with a primitive environment. Jet boats conflict with floatboating, causing safety problems within the narrow canyon corridor.

Road Access

Action I.D.1. - New Access Development

Develop no additional road access to the main stem of the Owyhee River. Maintain existing roads at their current low-standard of construction to allow passage of high clearance or four-wheel drive vehicles.

The Elko District will attempt to obtain an easement from the YP Ranch for access to the gauging station. If this is not possible the Elko District will study, within the limits of the BLM Wilderness Management Policy, the feasibility of upgrading an existing jeep trail at Twelve Mile Flat to a primitive road classification to provide safe access.

Discussion

Maintaining access roads at their current standards is in keeping with the management objectives stated in Part II and the primitive characteristics of the Owyhee River area.

Facility Management

Action I.E.1. - Future Developments

Develop only minimum recreation facilities for resource protection and primitive recreation management, such as vault toilets proposed at five boating access points.

Discussion

Three Forks and the various put-in points receive concentrated use by river boaters as well as those who use the canyons for other purposes. Action should be taken to avoid the anticipated sanitation problems and vegetation damage expected to occur on these fragile sites.

Action I.E.2. - Sign Program

Install directional signs along access roads. Install informational signs at boaters put-in points.

Discussion

Signing is helpful to direct people, and essential for implementing an information and education program which will help reduce the need for more intensive management practices.

Action I.E.3. - Staff Water Gauges

Install staff water gauges at boater put-in points which are easily readable.

Discussion

Information describing river characteristics at various water levels will allow boaters to anticipate potential conditions and problems.

Issue II - Environmental Protection

Protection of Natural Values

Action II.A.1. - Limit Vehicle Access in river Corridor

Motor vehicle use will be allowed on designated roads only.

Discussion

Steep slopes and fragile soils make the canyons unsuitable for vehicle use. Uncontrolled use of accessible areas of the canyons could cause long-term visual impacts which would impair the scenic quality of the canyon environment and detract from a primitive recreation experience.

By restricting vehicles to designated roads, the unauthorized and illegal collection of Indian and historic artifacts should be reduced.

Action II.A.2. - Cooperatively Control Livestock Within Canyons

Work cooperatively with ranchers to reduce grazing impacts in canyon bottomlands and riparian areas.

Discussion

Where possible, reducing livestock concentrations in the canyons by, for example, providing alternative water sources on surrounding plateaus, would improve the river's natural values.

Action II.A.3. - Manage Land and Mineral Entry Within River Corridor

Through existing regulations, control any land or mineral entry that would impair the river corridors suitability for wild and scenic and/or wilderness designation. Coordinate with governments of Oregon, Idaho and Nevada to mitigate water quality and environmental impacts of dredge or placer mining on the Owyhee and South Fork rivers.

Discussion

The Owyhee River is being considered by Congress for inclusion within the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System and also is included within 10 Wilderness Study Areas. The mainstem from the Oregon-Idaho stateline to Three Forks and from Crooked Creek to the Owyhee Reservoir is an Oregon State Scenic Waterway. Any land or mineral action that would impair the river's suitability for either designation is not in compliance with the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act or the Federal Land Policy and Management Act. Land and mineral actions must be in compliance with Oregon Scenic Waterway regulations.

Action II.A.4. - Regulate Existing Valid Mining Claims to Protect Natural, Cultural and Recreation Values

Operation of existing valid mineral rights will be accomplished under federal and state regulations designed to protect natural, cultural and recreation resources. In situations where serious adverse impacts cannot be avoided, the BLM will consider purchasing the mining rights or patented claims.

Discussion

Mining rights or patented lands will only be purchased as a last resort to prevent serious disturbance of natural, cultural and recreation resources.

Mining disturbance can be partially mitigated under the provisions of the Surface Protection Act. Mining activities are also regulated under 43 Code of Federal Regulations 3802 within Wilderness Study Areas (WSAs) and 43 CFR 3809 in areas outside WSAs.

Action II.A.5. - Construct No New Water Impoundments on the River

Construct no new impoundments on the rivers, coordinate this action with the Northwest Power Planning council. Manage the area to maintain or improve water quality in accordance with State and Federal water quality standards.

Discussion

Water impoundments are inconsistent with the management of river segments proposed for or designated as "wild" or "scenic" under the guidelines of the National Wild and Scenic Rivers Act. They are also not consistent with federal wilderness management or the Oregon State Scenic Waterways Act. Existing irrigation diversion dams will remain.

Action II.A.6. - Recreation Use Conflicts

Establish recreation use regulations that will include appropriate stipulations to minimize recreation use conflicts.

Discussion

Regulations will include stipulations to require fire pan use and garbage pack out, and will specify requirements for firewood collection, latrine construction, or removal of human refuse. These stipulations will change as recreation use conflicts develop or diminish.

Wildlife Values

Action II.B.1. - Monitor Wildlife and Threatened and Endangered Plants

Monitor bighorn sheep, waterfowl and raptor populations to detect changes in population characteristics and habitat use. Monitor T&E plant species to determine the impacts of recreational use on them. Adjust recreation carrying capacities, manage access and initiate visitor education programs as necessary to allow for the preservation and expansion of bighorn sheep and waterfowl populations, and the preservation of threatened and endangered plant species.



Discussion

Bighorn sheep, waterfowl and raptors are sensitive to human presence. Although increases in recreational use can likely occur without affecting the population, the level at which use becomes detrimental is not known. Recreational impact on known T&E plant species is unknown. Management will study the effects of increases in recreation use on bighorn sheep, raptors, waterfowl and T&E plants so that adverse effects can be detected and corrections implemented before serious problems occur.

Cultural Values

Action II.C.1. - Conduct Class III Cultural Resources Survey

Develop a cultural resources plan to include inventories to locate, identify, and evaluate historic and archaeological sites. As a result of data collected, conduct a Class III cultural resources survey on specified sites to develop programs for the preservation and interpretation of cultural sites. Nominate suitable sites or areas that may be eligible for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places.

Discussion

Important cultural sites are being destroyed by artifact collectors and vandals. For those sites of significant value and/or under an immediate threat of vandalism, salvage by competent authority must be considered. Many recreationists enjoy visiting the more interesting sites, especially caves, cabins and abandoned homesteads.

Issue III - Land Ownership Acquisition/Easements

Action III.A.1. - Negotiate Scenic Easements

Seek to obtain agreements with private land owners to protect the natural and cultural values of the canyons. If necessary, acquire scenic easements to prevent incompatible use or development of private land. Explore acquisition of private land from willing owners through land exchanges.

Discussion

Negotiated easements or other agreements with private land owners are valuable tools for preserving the primitive environment of the river corridor.

Action III.A.2. - Acquire Idaho State Lands

Acquire the following parcels of Idaho State land through the on going State exchange:

- T.13S., R.3W., Sec. 36
- T.13S., R.4W., Sec. 16 & 36
- T.13S., R.5W., Sec. 16 & 36
- T.14S., R.4W., Sec. 16 & 36
- T.14S., R.5W., Sec. 36

Discussion

Federal ownership of these lands will facilitate BLM management of the Owyhee River area. These lands are part of the South Mountain exchange currently being negotiated between the Idaho Department of Lands and the Boise BLM District.

All state land exchanges within Oregon on the Owyhee River have been completed through the Browns Ridge Land Exchange.

Access

Action III.B.1. - Negotiate Access Easements Across Private Land

Negotiate recreational use easements across private property where necessary to continue existing visitor road access.

Discussion

Future development and/or ownership of private properties could result in the loss of boating access to the river above Three Forks.

Withdrawal Review

Action III.C.1. - Power Site Withdrawals

Explore the possibility of obtaining relinquishments on all power site withdrawals along the river corridor and returning public lands to BLM management.

Discussion

The withdrawal review and subsequent relinquishment of withdrawals would facilitate management of the canyon corridor. Dam construction would not be consistent with requirements of the Oregon State Scenic Waterways Act.

Action III.C.2. - Bureau of Reclamation Withdrawals

Explore the possibility of obtaining relinquishments on all Bureau of Reclamation withdrawals along the river corridor and returning public lands to total BLM management.

Discussion

Relinquishment of Bureau of Reclamation withdrawals would allow for total BLM surface management of those lands, facilitating management consistent with the wild and scenic river proposal and interim wilderness management. Farmers and ranchers below Owyhee Reservoir have been interested in developing additional upstream storage to supplement their present irrigation water supply during dry periods. As a result, the Bureau of Reclamation conducted investigations during the late 1950's and early 1960's of two potential storage sites on the main stem Owyhee River. The two sites were Duncan Ferry, just downstream from the mouth of Crooked Creek, and Three Forks, just below the confluence of the three forks

of the Owyhee River. The Reconnaissance Report, Upper Owyhee Project, Idaho, dated June 1965 indicates neither project is economically feasible. The Bureau of Reclamation also conducted a feasibility study during the early 1970's of a storage development on Jordan Creek, a major tributary to the Owyhee River. As outlined in the concluding report, Jordan Valley Division, Upper Owyhee Project, Idaho-Oregon, dated August 1973, this development was found not justified because costs exceeded benefits.

Issue IV - Management Cooperation Between Agencies

Management Agreements With Federal, State and Local Agencies

Action IV.A.1. - Develop Management Programs

Where applicable coordinate the visitor and resource management program with the following federal, state and local agencies:

- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- Bureau of Reclamation
- Federal Energy Regulatory Commission
- Bureau of Indian Affairs
Duck Valley Indian Reservation
- Department of Defense - U.S. Air Force
- Northwest Power Planning Council
- State of Oregon
State Parks Division - Scenic Waterways
Marine Board
Department of Fish and Wildlife
State Land Board
Water Resources Department
State Historic Preservation Office
- State of Idaho
Outfitters and Guides Board
Department of Fish and Game
Department of Lands
Department of Water Resources
State Historic Preservation Office
- State of Nevada
Department of Wildlife
State Historic Preservation Office
Conservation and Natural Resources
Department

- Malheur County, Oregon
- Owyhee County, Idaho
- Elko County, Nevada

Discussion

The above agencies either manage resources, control access routes, have land ownership, provide search and rescue, or license commercial operators (Idaho) on the Owyhee and South Fork Rivers. Low flying military aircraft disrupt the natural serenity of the canyon and lessen the sense of solitude and isolation it provides. Flights may also disturb California bighorn sheep and other wildlife species associated with the canyon corridors. Support and cooperation between agencies is necessary to effectively and efficiently manage the river.

Part IV - Implementation

Phasing and Cost Estimates



Table 3 shows planned actions and cost estimates for the river management program through Fiscal Year 1990. All 27 actions are scheduled for implementation during the 8 year period. While additional planning, survey and design, and/or construction will be necessary to fully implement some of the actions, others can be implemented with relatively little or no prerequisite work. Cost estimates are not shown for some actions as additional funding is not necessary for either their initiation or continued implementation. The following is a summary by fiscal year of the total estimated funding needs shown in Figure 2:

Fiscal Year	Total Estimated Funding Needs (\$)
1983	34,000
1984	47,000
1985	84,000
1986	105,000
1987	109,000
1988	59,000
1989	58,000
1990	52,000
	548,000

Table 3

	Action	FY '83	FY '84	FY '85	FY '86	FY '87	FY '88	FY '89	FY '90	Est. Cost
I.A.1.	River Segment Management Jurisdiction				(No cost)					—
I.A.2	Recreation Special Use Permits and Noncommercial Party Regis.	1,000					1,000			2,000
I.A.3	Proposed Wild and Scenic River Designation				(No cost)					—
I.B.1.	Visitor Use Supervision		1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	7,000
I.B.2.	Visitor Use Allocation System			7,000	7,000	4,000	3,000	3,000	3,000	27,000
I.B.3.	Recreation Use Monitoring	30,000	30,000	30,000	30,000	30,000	30,000	30,000	30,000	240,000
I.B.4.	River Land E Program	2,000	8,000	5,000	2,000	2,000	2,000	2,000	2,000	25,000
I.B.5.	Search and Rescue		2,000	2,000	2,000	2,000	2,000	2,000	2,000	14,000
I.C.1.	Types of River Craft Allowed				(No cost)					—
I.D.1.	New Access Development				(No cost)					—
I.E.1.	Future Developments Survey and Design Construction		2,000	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000		27,000
I.E.2.	Sign Program Design Implementation		1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	7,000
I.E.3.	Staff Water Guages			1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000		5,000
II.A.1.	Limit Vehicle Access in River Corridor				(No cost)					—
II.A.2.	Cooperatively Control Livestock Within Canyons			8,000	13,000	15,000				36,000
II.A.3.	Manage Land and Mineral Entry Within River Corridor				(No cost)					—
II.A.4.	Regulate Existing Valid Mining Claims To Protect Natural, Cultural, and Rec. Resources		2,000	2,000	2,000	2,000	2,000	2,000	2,000	14,000
II.A.5.	Construct No Water Impoundments on the River				(No cost)					—
II.A.6.	Recreation Use Conflicts Wildlife and T&E Plants				(No cost)					—
II.B.1.	Monitor Wildlife and T & E Plants	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	8,000
II.C.1.	Conduct Class III Cultural Resources Survey			5,000	5,000	5,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	45,000
III.A.1	Scenic Easements		Unknown, pending Wild and Scenic or Wilderness Designation							
III.A.2	Acquire State Lands(Idaho)			5,000	15,000					30,000
III.B.1	Obtain Access Easements Across Private Lands					20,000				20,000
III.C.1	Powersite Withdrawals				10,000	10,000				20,000
III.C.2	Bureau of Reclamation Withdrawals				10,000	10,000				20,000
IV.A.1.	Management Agreements with Fed., State & Local Agencies				(No Cost)					—
	FY Totals	34,000	47,000	84,000	105,000	109,000	59,000	58,000	52,000	—
					Approximate Total					548,000

Action phasing and cost estimates for the planned management program during the 8-year implementation period FY 1983-1990.

Part V - Appendices



Appendix A - Planning Participants and Cooperators, Bureau of Land Management

Management Participation

Fearl Parker, District Manager, Vale, OR
Joe Zimmer, District Manager, Boise, ID
Rodney Harris, District Manager, Elko, NV
Ray Monroe, Southern Malheur Resource Area Manager, Vale, OR
Barry Cushing, Northern Malheur Resource Area Manager, Vale, OR
Oscar Anderson, Owyhee Resource Area Manager, Boise, ID
C. Vernon Peugh, Bruneau Resource Area Manager, Boise, ID
Robert Bolton, Acting Elko Resource Area Manager, Elko, NV

Staff Participation

Gerald Meyer, Outdoor Recreation Planner, Vale, OR
Duane Marti, Cultural Resource Specialist, Vale, OR
Barry Rose, Public Affairs Specialist, Vale, OR
Richard Conrad, Wilderness Specialist, Vale, OR
Wally Meyer, Outdoor Recreation Planner, Boise, ID
John Benedict, Outdoor Recreation Planner, Boise, ID
Mark Davis, Landscape Architect, Boise, ID
Gene Drais, Outdoor Recreation Planner, Elko, NV
Steven Ashworth, Outdoor Recreation Planner, Elko, NV

Owyhee River Management Plan Ad Hoc Work Group

Jim Baughman, Idaho Outfitters and Guide Board
John Lilly, Director, Assistant Administrator, State Parks Division
Paul Donhefner, Oregon State Marine Board
Ernest Seuell, Malheur County Judge
David Tyler, Northwest Rafter Association
Keith Jensen, Environmental Representative
Bob Sevy, Commercial River Operator
Lyle Talbot, Past Chairman, Vale District Advisory Council
Marty Morache, Idaho Department of Fish and Game

The Ad Hoc Work Group was formed to help provide citizen and state agency guidance in preparation of the draft and final management plans. The work group met in Vale, Oregon, on May 27 and August 3, 1982, and submitted oral and written comments on the draft management plan throughout its development.

Public Participation

Four hundred copies of the draft Owyhee River Management Plan were mailed to interested persons in November 1982, and a public comment period on the draft plan was published in the Federal Register and held from November 15, 1982, to February 5, 1983.

During the comment period public meetings to discuss the draft plan were held in Jordan Valley and Portland, Oregon, and in Boise, Idaho. A total of 89 people attended these meetings and provided approximately 150 oral comments on the document. As well, 169 letters were received on the draft plan. A summary of oral and written public comments are available for review at the Vale District office.

Appendix B - Bibliography and Publications of Interest

Aikens, C. Melvin, David L. Cole, and Robert Stuckenrath. 1977. Excavations at Dirty Shame Rockshelter, southeastern Oregon. Tebiwa, Miscellaneous Papers of the Idaho State University Museum of Natural History, No. 4. Pocatello.

Arighi, Scott; Arighi, Margaret S. 1974. Wildwater Touring, Techniques and Tours. Macmillan Publishing Co., Incl. Collier Macmillan publishers, London.

Borenson, Keo; Ula Moody, and Kelly Murphey. 1979. Cultural Resources Overview for The Bureau of Land Management, Vale District, Oregon. Cultural Resource Management Reports, No. 3. Sandpoint, Idaho: Cultural Resource Consultants.

DeForge, James R. 1964. Man's Invasion Into the Bighorn's Habitat. Trans. Desert Bighorn Council 16:112-115

DeGrazia, Sebastian. 1964. Of Time, Work, and Leisure. Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, 1964.

Dunaway, David J. 1971. Human Disturbance as a Limiting Factor of Sierra Nevada Bighorn Sheep. Trans. 1st N.A. Wildsheep Cont. 1:165-173.

Ferrier, G.J. 1974. Bighorn Sheep Along the Lower Colorado River, 1974-2050. 1974. Trans. Desert Bighorn Council 18:40-45.

Fretwell, Hazel R. 1973. The Owyhee Crossing. Owyhee Outpost. No. 4. Murphy Idaho: Owyhee Historical Society.

Garren, John. 1974. Oregon River Tours. Binford and Mort, Thomas Binford, Publisher.

Geist, V. 1971. Mountain Sheep: A Study in Behavior and Evolution. University of Chicago Press. 383 pp

Haines, Francis D., Jr. 1965. The Journal of John Work 1830-31. PHD thesis. Pullman: Washington State University.

Hanley, Mike with Ellis Lucia. 1975. Owyhee Trails. Caldwell: The Caxton Printers.

Hanley, Mike with Omer Stanford. 1976. Sagebrush and Axle Grease. Caldwell: Shorb Printing Company.

Idaho Historical Society. 1965 Camp Three Forks. Reference Series No. 358. Boise. 1966 The Skinner Road. Reference Series No. 427. Boise.

Mathew, Geoffrey W.; William H. Blackburn. 1982. Draft Report. Assessments of Geology, Energy, and Minerals (GEM) Resources, Owyhee River GRA.

Nash, Jay B. 1960. Philosophy of Recreation and Leisure. Iowa: William Brown Company.

Nelson, M. 1966. Problems of Recreational Use of Game Refuges. Trans Desert Bighorn Council 10:13-20

McQuivey, R. P. 1978 The Bighorn Sheep of Nevada. Nevada Dept. Fish and Game Biol. Bull. No. 6. Reno. 81 p.

Oregon State University. 1979. Shelby, Bo; Danley, Mark. Allocating River Use.

Pfister, Robert E.; Donheffner, Paul E. 1979. Organization for Recreational Resources Research and Consulting (ORRRC), Owyhee River Visitor Carrying Capacity Study.

Rodney, Lynn S. 1966. Administration of Public Recreation. New York: Golden Press.

Steward, Julian H. and Erminie Wheeler-Voegelin. 1974. The Northern Paiute Indians. New York: Garland Publishing Inc.

University of Oregon Outdoor Program, Owyhee River Campsite Inventory. 1978.

USDA - Forest Service. 1989. Backcountry River Recreation Project, North Central Forest Experiment Station. National River Recreation Study Owyhee River.

USDA - Forest Service; USDI Bureau of Land Management; USDI Park Service; University of Nevada Reno. 1981. Proceedings of a National Conference, Recreation Use Allocation.

USDI - Bureau of Land Management.

1982. Owyhee River Whitewater Floatboating Report, Vale District Office.

USDI - National Park Service.

1979. Final Report - Environmental Statement; Owyhee Wild and Scenic River Study.

Wehausen, J.D.

1980. Sierra Nevada Bighorn Sheep: History and Population Ecology PHD. diss. Univ. of Michigan, Ann Arbor 240 p.

Wilson, Larry O.

1968. Distribution and Ecology of the Desert Bighorn in Southeast Utah Div. Fish and Game 68(5):220 pp

Appendix C - Applicable Federal and State Laws and Regulations

- The Wild and Scenic Rivers Act: Public Law 90-542: 90th Congress, S.119: October 2, 1968.
- Federal Land Policy and Management Act: Public Law 94-579: 94th Congress, S.507: October 21, 1976.
- Wilderness Act: Public Law 88-577: (S.4): September 3, 1964.
- Interim Management Policy and Guidelines for Lands Under Wilderness Review, Bureau of Land Management.
- 43 Code of Federal Regulations: Subchapter F - Wildlife Management (6000); Subchapter H - Recreation Programs (8000).
- Oregon Scenic Waterways Act (ORS 390.805 to 390.925).
- Oregon Administrative Rules, Chapter 736, Division 40 -State Parks and Recreation Division.

Appendix D - Management Program Alternatives

The management program presented in Part III resulted from an assessment of various alternatives to resolve identified issues. Alternatives considered but not included as part of the management program are listed below. For some actions, there are no alternatives which could be implemented to resolve issues within the framework of the stated management objective.

Issue I - Level and Degree of Administrative Control

Action I.A.1. - River Segment Management Jurisdiction

Alternative -

(No viable alternatives determined.)

Action I.A.2. - Recreation Special Use Permits.

Alternative -

Individual permits will be required for each BLM District. This would cause additional paperwork and would place additional burdens on boaters.

Action I.A.3. - Proposed Wild and Scenic River Designation

Alternative -

Do not designate the main stem and South Fork as a National Wild and Scenic River, but rely on possible wilderness area designation or BLM management as a special recreation area to protect resources. Special recreation area management would not assure long-lasting protection. Congressional designation as wilderness is questionable due to the political nature of such an action.

Action I.B.1. - Visitor Use Supervision

Alternative -

Allow unregulated boating use of the river. This could result in damage to natural and cultural values through excessive and uncontrolled recreation use.

Action I.B.2. - Visitor Use Allocation System

Alternative -

(Reserved.)

Action I.B.3. - Recreational Use Monitoring

Alternative -

Do not monitor recreation use. Impact on resources from public use would not be determined until unacceptable changes occurred.

Action I.B.4. - River Information and Education Program

Alternative -

(No viable alternatives determined.)

Action I.B.5. - Search and Rescue

Alternative -

Develop no SAR agreement, but rely on state law and a working relationship between sheriffs departments and the BLM. This would work as long as lines of communications are kept open.

Action I.C.1. - Types of River Craft Allowed

Alternative -

Allow motor boat and aircraft travel on river segments. Disturbance of solitude would continue and safety problems would increase with increased use by float and motor boats. Wildlife would be further displaced and harrassed.

Action I.D.1. - New Access Development

Alternative -

Improve road access to selected put-in points to allow passage by passage by 2-wheel drive vehicles. This would cause an increase in boating use, resulting in the need for more intensive visitor management practices.

Action I.E.1. - Future Developments

Alternative -

Develop a recreation site just upstream from Three Forks allowing only day-use. This would be an unsuitable alternative in light of present funding constraints. Although road access to Warm Springs is poor, it is a popular undeveloped recreation site due to the presence of the springs. Warm Springs is also on private land and acquisition would have to precede development.

Action I.E.2. - Sign Program

Alternative -

(No viable alternatives determined.)

Action I.E.3. - Staff Water Gauges

Alternative -

(No viable alternative determined.)

Issue II - Environmental Protection

Action II.A.1. - Limit Vehicle Access in River Corridor

Alternative -

(No viable alternative determined.)

Action II.A.2. - Cooperatively Control Livestock Within Canyons

Alternative -

Continue the existing level of livestock use. This would result in continued localized degradation of vegetation, soil conditions, and of water quality, including the presence of dead cattle in the river.

Action II.A.3. - Manage Land and Mineral Entry Within River Corridor

Alternative -

Do not manage land and mineral entry. Under existing law and regulation, actions must not impair the areas suitability for Wild and Scenic or wilderness designation.

Action II.A.4. - Regulate Existing Valid Mining Claims to Protect Natural, Cultural and Recreational Values

Alternative -

(No viable alternative determined.)

Action II.A.5. - Construct No Water Impoundments On The River

Alternative -

(No viable alternative determined.)

Action II.A.6. - Recreation Use Conflicts

Alternative -

(No viable alternative determined.)

Action II.B.1. - Monitor Wildlife Populations and T & E Plants

Alternative -

No action - Could result in bighorns avoiding existing habitat, causing a loss in population. Could also result in reduction in waterfowl and raptor populations through scattering of young. And cause a loss of T&E plants through trampling and collecting.

Action II.C.1. - Conduct Class III Cultural Resources Survey

Alternative -

No action - Damage to cultural values would continue and probably increase, since BLM river rangers would not know site specific locations for surveillance. Sites requiring stabilization or salvage excavations would not be identified.

Issue III - Land Ownership

Action III.A.1. - Negotiate Scenic Easements

Alternative -

No action - Unacceptable development could occur on private lands, and the public could be denied access of some parcels for camping or enjoyment of historic features.

Action III.A.2. - Acquire Idaho State Land

Alternative -

No action - State lands would remain intermingled with Public Land, thereby resulting in possible fragmented management practices.

Action III.B.1. - Negotiate Access Easements Across Private Land

Alternative -

No action - The public could be denied access to the river at Crutcher's Crossing and the "45" Ranch. Crutcher's is a popular boating put-in point.

Action III.C.1. - Powersite Withdrawals

Alternative -

No action - Would complicate BLM management.

Action III.C.2. - Bureau of Reclamation Withdrawals

Alternative -

No action - Would complicate BLM management of river corridor due to possible incompatible uses such as recreation home sites.

Issue IV - Management Cooperation Between Agencies

Action IV.A.1. - Management Agreements with Federal, State and Local Agencies

Alternative -

Continue as fragmented management, or in some cases, no management, on river segments. This would result in public confusion, management conflicts, and environmental degradation.

Appendix E - Recreation Opportunity Spectrum Class Descriptions

Opportunity Class	Experience Opportunity	Setting Opportunity	Activity Opportunity*
Primitive	Opportunity for isolation from the sights and sound of man, to feel a part of the natural environment, to have a high degree of challenge and risk, and to use outdoor skills.	Area is characterized by essentially unmodified natural environment of fairly large size. Concentration of users is very low and evidence of other users is minimal. The area is managed to be essentially free from evidence of man-induced restrictions and controls. Only facilities essential for resource protection are used. No facilities for comfort or convenience of the user are provided. Spacing of groups is informal and dispersed to minimize contacts between groups. Motorized use within the area is not permitted.	Camping Hiking Climbing Enjoying Scenery or Natural Features Nature Study Photography Horseback Riding Spelunking Hunting (big game, small game, upland birds, waterfowl) Ski Touring and Snowshoeing Swimming Diving (Skin and Scuba) Fishing Canoeing Sailing River running (non-motorized craft)
Semi-Primitive Nonmotorized	Some opportunity for isolation from the sights and sounds of man, but not as important as for primitive opportunities. Opportunity to have a high degree of interaction with the natural environment, to have moderate challenge and risk, and to use outdoor skills.	Area is characterized by a predominantly un-modified natural environment of moderate to large size. Concentration of users is low, but there is often evidence of other area users. On-site controls and restrictions may be present, but are subtle. Facilities are provided for the protection of resource values and the safety of users only. Spacing of groups may be formalized to disperse use and limit contacts between groups. Motorized use is not permitted.	

Semi-Primitive Motorized	<p>Some opportunity for isolation from sights and sounds of man, but not as important as for primitive opportunities. Opportunity to have a high degree</p> <p>environment, to have moderate challenge and risk, and to use outdoor skills. Explicit opportunity to use motorized equipment while in the area.</p>	<p>Area is characterized by a predominantly un-modified natural environment of moderate to large size. Concentration of users is low, but there is often evidence of other area</p> <p>restrictions may be present, but are subtle. Facilities are provided for the protection of re-source values and the safety of users only. Spacing of groups may be formal-ized to disperse use and limit contacts between groups. Motorized use is not permitted.</p>	<p>Same as the above, plus the following: ORV Use (4-WD, Dune Buggy, Dirt Bike, Snowmobile)</p>
Roaded Natural	<p>About equal opportunities for affiliation with other user groups and for isolation from sights and sounds of man. Opportunity to have a high degree of interaction with the natural environment. Challenge and risk opportunities are not very important except in specific challenging activities. Practice of outdoor skills may be important. Opportunities for both motorized and nonmotorized recreation are present.</p>	<p>Area is characterized by a generally natural environment with moderate evidence of the sights and sounds of man. Re-source modification and utilization practices are evident, but harmonize with the natural environment. Concentration of users is low to moderate with facilities some-times provided for group activity. On-site controls and restrictions offer a sense of security. Rustic facilities are provided for user convenience as well as for safety and resource protection. Conventional motorized use is provided for in construction standards and de-sign of facilities.</p>	<p>All activities listed previously, plus the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Picnicking Rock Collecting Wood Gathering Auto Touring Downhill Skiing Snowplay Ice Skating Water Skiing & Other Water Sports Hang Gliding Interpretive Use Rustic Resorts & Organized Camps

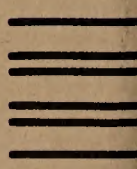
Rural	<p>Opportunities to experience affiliation with individuals and groups are prevalent as is the convenience of sites and opportunities. These factors are generally more important than the natural setting. Opportunities for wild-land challenges, risk taking, and testing of outdoor skills are unimportant, except in those activities involving challenge and risk.</p>	<p>Area is characterized by substantially modified natural environment. Resource modification and utilization practices are obvious. Sights and sounds of man are readily evident, and the concentration of users is often moderate to high. A considerable number of facilities are designed for use by a large number of people. Facilities are often provided for specific activities. Developed sites, roads and trails, are designed for moderate to high use. Moderate densities are provided far away from developed sites. Facilities for intensive motorized use are available.</p>	<p>All activities listed previously, plus the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Competitive Games Spectator Sports Bicycling Jogging Outdoor Concerts Modern Resorts
Modern Urban	<p>Opportunities to experience affiliation with individuals and groups are prevalent as is the convenience of sites and opportunities. Experiencing the natural environment, and the use of outdoor skills and largely unimportant.</p>	<p>Area is characterized by a highly modified environment, although the background may have natural elements. Vegetation is often exotic and manicured. Soil may be protected by surfacing. Sights and sounds of man, on-site, predominate. Large numbers of users can be expected. Modern facilities are provided for the use and convenience of large numbers of people. Controls and restrictions are obvious and numerous. Facilities for high intensity motor use and parking are present with forms of mass transit often available.</p>	<p>All activities listed previously.</p>

***Note:** This listing of activity opportunities is provided for illustrative purposes. It is not an all-inclusive list of activity opportunities on the public lands.

BLM Library
Denver Federal Center
Bldg. 50, OC-521
P.O. Box 25047
Denver, CO 80225

U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
Vale District Office
P.O. Box 700
Vale, Oregon 97918

OFFICIAL BUSINESS
PENALTY FOR PRIVATE USE, \$300



BULK MAIL
POSTAGE AND FEES PAID
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
INT 415